

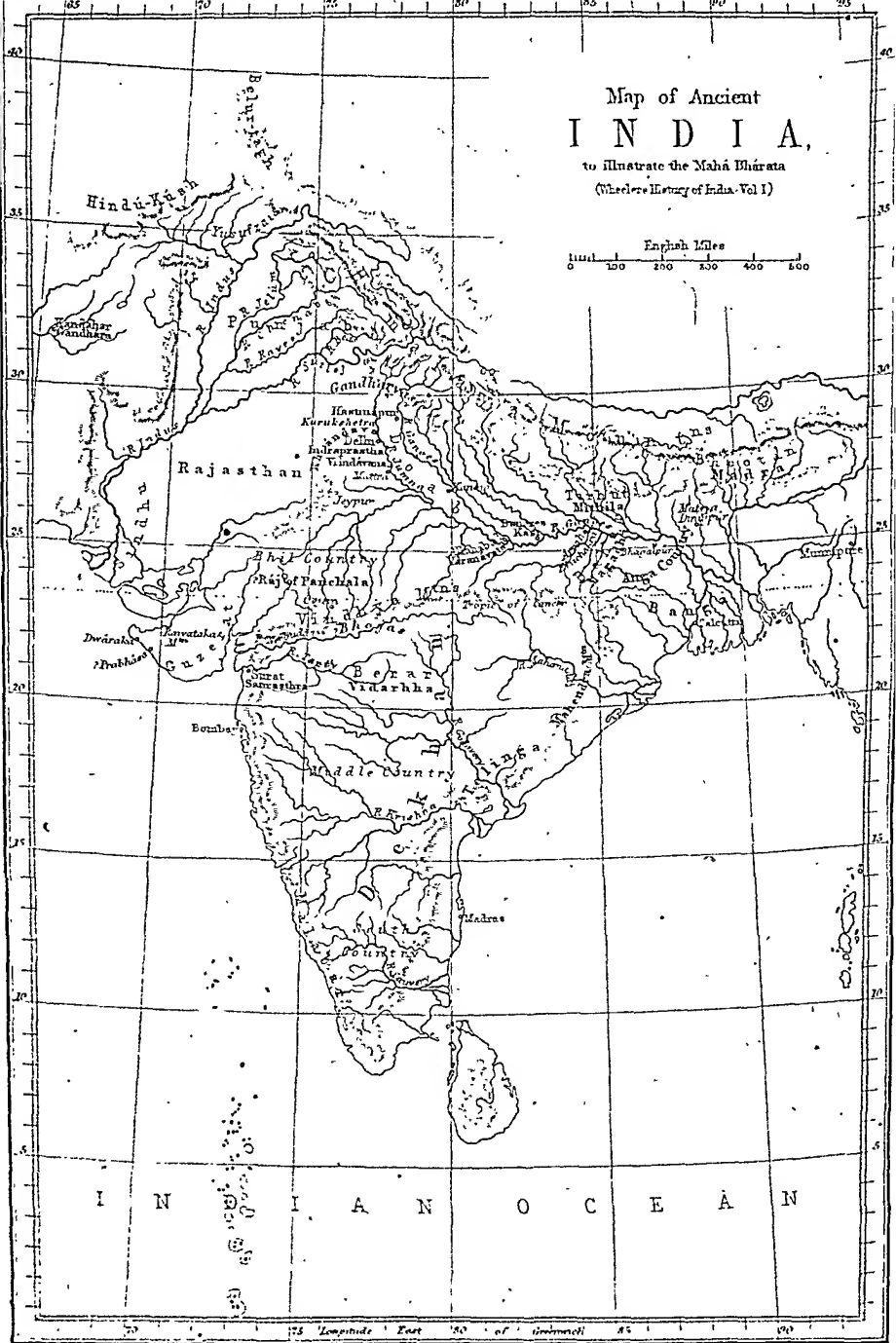
THE
HISTORY OF INDIA.

VOL. I.

THE VEDIC PERIOD AND THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

Map of Ancient
INDIA,
to illustrate the Mahā Bhārata
(Wheldons Library of India-Vol I)

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THE

HISTORY OF INDIA

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES.

BY

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VOL. I.

THE VEDIC PERIOD AND THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

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PREFACE.

MORE than a century has passed away since the rise of British ascendancy in India, and yet a history which should combine a tolerably exhaustive review of the religion and civilization of the Hindús, together with an exposition of the policy which has hitherto guided the British Government in its dealings with Native powers, is still a desideratum in European literature. Accordingly this task has been attempted during a residence of some years in the country, under circumstances peculiarly favourable to its accomplishment; and in announcing the early publication of the first three volumes, it seems desirable to indicate the general character and scope of the entire work.

The materials for the History of India may be indicated under three distinct heads, viz.—

1st. The religious books of the Hindús, and especially the two great Epics, known as the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, which may be regarded as the national treasuries of all that has been preserved of the history and institutions of the people.

2nd. The compilations of Mussulman annalists and biographers.

3rd. The original records which have been preserved in the several departments of the Government of India, and in the record rooms of the local governments, together with

the unofficial travels, narratives, and histories which have been published since the period when the peninsula of India was first explored by adventurers from Europe and elsewhere.

Three volumes of the projected History of India are now in course of publication, and are intended to comprise what may be called the Hindú period. The first volume, which is now presented to the public, comprises the Vedic period, and the traditions preserved in the Mahá Bhárata. The second volume, which is already in the press, will exhibit the traditions to be found in the Rámáyana, and will be published at an early date. The third volume is in preparation, and will include the results of the first and second volumes, as well as those which are to be drawn from the more salient points in Sanskrit and Mussulman literature; and will thus form a resumé of the History of India from the earliest period to the rise of British power.

It should be remarked that the primary object of the author is not so much to draw up a history of the literature or religion of the Hindús, or to exhibit the results of comparative philology, as to delineate the civilization and institutions of the people with especial reference to their present condition and future prospects, and to the political relations of the British Government with the great Indian feudatories of the Crown. But it must be borne in mind that the ancient traditions of the people of India are household words in every quarter of the Peninsula; that they have not passed away from the land in the same way that those of Stonehenge and Druidism, the worship of Thor and Odin, and the wars of the Heptarchy, have passed away from the people of England; but that they are to the Hindú all that the Old Testament is to the Jew, and all that the Bible, the Library, and the Newspaper, are to the European. In a word, it may be emphatically stated that a thorough acquaintance with the ideas and aspirations of the masses is impossible without a close familiarity with the subject-matter of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana.

It is intended that the History of India now announced should also comprise the whole period of British administration from the middle of the last century to the present day. But as regards this later history no definite announcement can at present be made. It will be sufficient to state that, should the writer be enabled to complete his design, the entire work will conclude with a history of British administration in India, and a critical review of the policy by which the British Government has been actuated since the first establishment of the late East India Company as a political power.

Whilst, however, the volume now presented to the public may be regarded as the first of a series, it may also be treated as complete in itself, inasmuch as it comprises a critical digest of the Mahá Bhárata, which is not only an independent work, but also the most voluminous and perhaps the most valuable Epic which has hitherto been preserved in a written language. To have undertaken the digest of such a work direct from the Sanskrit would probably have proved to be the labour of a lifetime; for a bare translation of the whole poem would alone occupy from twelve to fifteen octavo volumes, without any explanation or comment whatever. Fortunately however the task of analysing and abridging has been greatly facilitated in the present instance by the discovery of a manuscript translation of the more important portions of the Mahá Bhárata, which was lodged in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal many years ago under a wrong title, and which there is reason to believe was drawn up by the late Professor H. H. Wilson.¹ The author must also express his obligations to a young Sanskrit scholar, Baboo Obenash Chunder Ghose, who favoured him with oral translations of such portions of the poem as

¹ The manuscript was very illegibly written upon paper much embrowned by age, and seems to have been at least fifty years in existence. The whole has now been copied and indexed, and forms nine volumes folio. The original was, by some mistake, put away in the Calcutta library under the head of Bhagavat-Gitá, and was not discovered until four years ago, when the author accidentally went for the supposed Bhagavat-Gitá, and found, to his surprise and gratification, that the manuscript contained the bulk of the Mahá Bhárata.

had been omitted from the manuscript in question, together with many popular interpretations of the ancient story which are given by the Pundits to their Native audiences.

In conclusion, the author must again be permitted to remark that his primary object is not to illustrate Sanskrit literature, or to treat of questions connected with the Sanskrit language, but to compile a political History of India. Accordingly all matters of mere antiquarian, or philological, or literary interest have been generally excluded from his work, partly because they do not fall within the scope of his labours, and partly because he is conscious that he is unfitted for a task which must be left to Sanskrit scholars. Indeed a History of India, which should be based upon a knowledge of the many languages, living and dead, which appertain to the great Indian continent, would be beyond the powers of any single individual, and could only be accomplished by a body of encyclopædists whose labours would necessarily extend over many scores of volumes. At the same time, however, no ordinary care has been spared to ensure correctness in reproducing the ancient traditions in the very condensed form in which they are now submitted to the general reader, and to verify interpretations of difficult passages by reference to the existing current belief of the people themselves.

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HISTORY OF INDIA.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of India is of universal interest from the light which it throws upon the annals of the human race; but it is of paramount importance to the people of Great Britain. It illustrates many phases of civilization which are at present but imperfectly apprehended, but which yet add largely to our knowledge of man. It refers to religions which express almost every aspiration in human nature, from the lowest animal instinct to the most elevated moral sentiment, and from the worship of the vilest images to the conception of One Being, spiritual and supreme. Above all, however, it indicates the past and present conditions of vast and varied populations, who may be regarded as a sacred trust confided to the British nation by what may be termed an irresistible destiny, or, in other words, a divinely ordered law.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

Importance of
the history of
India.

New phases of
civilization.

Significance of
the religions.

Indicates the
past and present
condition of a
people confided
to Great Britain
as a trust.

History of Brit-
ish admini-stra-
tion distinct
from the history
of the Hindûs.

The history of the British administration of India has frequently been written, but the history of the

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

Difficulties in
apprehending
the history of
the Hindús.

Personal observ-
ation of com-
paratively small
value.

Imperfect know-
ledge of Oriental
scholars.

Knowledge of
the masses in
England of re-
growth.

Hindús themselves is almost a blank to the European. Indeed the subject is generally regarded as perplexing and wearisome. The religion appears complicated, unmeaning, and often repulsive. The caste system excites no sympathy. The whole framework of society is opposed to European ideas. The names of persons and places are strange, and remembered with difficulty. The result has been, that whilst the ruling powers have ever exhibited a genuine desire to promote the well-being of the governed, they have in many cases but imperfectly apprehended the ideas and aspirations of the masses. Englishmen who have passed the greater part of their lives in India, would yet find it difficult to draw up an imaginary dialogue between two Hindús which should approximate to truth. Even Oriental scholars, who have familiarized themselves with the stores of Brahmanical learning, are but partially acquainted with the thoughts and ways of the many millions who are living under British rule. Nor will this ignorance be surprising when it is considered how little Englishmen knew, until late years, of the middle and lower classes of their own countrymen, although bound to them by a common language, a common literature, a common faith, and a common nationality.¹

¹ The extent to which European residents in India are ignorant of the domestic life of the Hindús was thus indicated by Lord William Bentinck sixty years ago; and the conditions specified are at least as true in the present day. "The result of my own observation during my residence in India is, that the Europeans generally know little or nothing of the customs and manners of the Hindús. We are all acquainted with some prominent marks and facts, which all who run may read; but their manner of thinking, their domestic habits and ceremonies, in which circumstances a knowledge of the people consists, is, I fear, in great part wanting to us. We understand very imperfectly their language. They perhaps know more of ours; but their knowledge is by no means sufficiently extensive to give a description of subjects not easily represented by the insulated words in daily use.

The history of India, properly so called, is to be found in the two voluminous Épics known as the Mahā Bhārata, or "Great War of Bhārata," and the Rāmāyana, or "Adventures of Rāma." These extraordinary poems comprise the whole of what remains of the political, social, and religious history of India, and may be regarded as the reflex of the Hindū world. But at the same time they are of such an interminable length, and exhibit such a complicated intertwining of traditions and fables, referring to widely different periods, races, and religions, that the student is frequently lost in a literary jungle. It is certain, however, that a familiarity with these two poems is as indispensable to a knowledge of the Hindūs, as a familiarity with the Old Testament is indispensable to a knowledge of the Jews. They form the great national treasures out of which the bards have borrowed the stories of their ballads, the eulogists and genealogists have taken the materials for their so-called histories, and the later Brāhmans have drawn the subject-matter of their religious discourses and the groundwork of their moral teaching; whilst nearly every plot in a Hindū drama, or sculptured group in a Hindū pa-

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

History of India
to be found in
the Mahā Bhā-
rata and Rāmā-
yana.
It is a comprehensive
character of the
two poems.

Interminable
length and com-
plexity of tradi-
tions and fables.

Familiarity with
the two poems
is indispensable to
a knowledge of
the Hindūs.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

Vast influence
exercised by the
two poems upon
the masses.

Their extraor-
dinary popular-
ity.

Of in bene-
ficial results of
reading them or
singing them

Long chrono-
logical interval
between the age
in which the
events took
place and the
age in which the
Mahá Bhárata
and Rámáyana
were composed.

goda, refers to some character or scene belonging to one or other of these famous poems. Few Hindús may perhaps be acquainted with the whole of these Epics, and none have ventured to subject them to a critical analysis and investigation; yet their influence upon the masses of the people is beyond calculation, and infinitely greater and more universal than the influence of the Bible upon modern Europe. The leading incidents and scenes are familiar to the Hindús from their childhood. They are frequently represented at village festivals, whilst the stories are chaunted aloud at almost every social gathering; and indeed form the leading topic of conversation amongst Hindús generally, and especially amongst those who have passed the meridian of life. In a word, these poems are to the Hindús all that the Library, the Newspaper, and the Bible are to the European; whilst the books themselves are regarded with a superstitious reverence, which far exceeds that which has ever been accorded to any other revelation, real or supposed. To this day it is the common belief that to peruse or merely to listen to the perusal of the Mahá Bhárata or Rámáyana, will ensure prosperity in this world, and eternal happiness hereafter; will give wealth to those who are poor, and children to the woman who is barren. At the same time they are cherished by the Hindús as national property, belonging to the national soil, and containing the records of the deeds of their forefathers in the days when the gods held frequent communion with the children of men.

Before, however, reproducing in a historical form the main traditions which are embodied in these ancient Epics, there is one point which may be

briefly indicated, especially as it will form a frequent subject of future discussion. The leading events belong to one age; the poems belong to another and a later period. In other words, the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana were not composed in their present form until a period long after that in which the heroes of the two poems lived and died. The result has been that the events of one age have been coloured by the ideas of another; and this chronological interval, which could scarcely have been less than one or two thousand years, is rendered more important from the fact that the religion which flourished in the age in which the events occurred, had more or less passed away, and a new one been established in the succeeding age, in which the poems were composed. The former may be called the Vedic period, the latter the Brahmanic period.

Events coloured by the ideas of the subsequent age.

Changes in religion during the interval.

Distinction between the Vedic and the Brahmanic periods.

The term Vedic is here borrowed from the Rig-Veda, which is a very ancient collection of hymns, or mantras, addressed to different deities who will be presently described. These hymns are of considerable value, inasmuch as they did not originally form part of a laboured and artificial ritual, but are the genuine outpourings of simple minds, eagerly praying to the gods for material and temporal blessings.² Evidence will be furnished hereafter to show

The Vedic period coeval with the main events recorded in the two Epics.

² The Vedas are four in number, but the first and oldest, known as the Rig-Veda, is the one which principally demands attention, as the other three belong to a subsequent and ritualistic age, and indeed are little more than recasts of the Rig-Veda. (See Wilson's Rig-Veda, Vol. I. Introduction; also Goldstücker's paper in the English Cyclopædia upon the Vedas.) The four Vedas are respectively termed the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda.

Each Veda is divided into two parts, viz.—

1st, The Hymns, or Mantras, which express the wants and aspirations of the worshippers, and thereby throw some light upon the social condition of the people.

2nd, The Brahmanas, which belong to a ritualistic age, and refer to rites and

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The Brahmanic
age coeval with
the composition
of the two Epics.

Characteristics
of the Vedic pe-
riod.

Characteristics
of the Brah-
manic period.

of Brahman-
ascendancy.

Necessity for
glancing at the
civilization and
religion of the
Vedic age, before
commencing the
Mahá Bhárata
and Rámá-
yana.

that the Vedic age was the one in which the main traditions of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana seem to have taken place; whilst the Brahmanic age, which succeeded to the Vedic period, was the one in which the two poems were composed. The leading points of difference between the Vedic and Brahmanic periods may be thus indicated. In the Vedic period the Bráhmans were scarcely known as a separate community; the caste system had not been introduced, and gods were worshipped who were subsequently superseded by deities of other names and other forms. In the Brahmanic period the Bráhmans had formed themselves into an exclusive ecclesiastical hierarchy, endowed with vast spiritual powers, to which even the haughtiest Rajas were compelled to bow. The caste system had been introduced in all its fulness, whilst the old Vedic gods were fast passing away from the memory of man, and giving place to the three leading Brahmanical deities—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Again, the Vedic period is characterized by a patriarchal simplicity, which is wanting in the Brahmanic age, when the luxury and splendour of the Hindú Rajas had reached a climax side by side with the increased power and influence exercised by the Brahmanical hierarchy. It will thus be seen that before entering upon the story of the two Epics, it will be advisable to glance more particularly at the civilization and religion of the Vedic age, and thereby establish a

ceremonies, of an unmeaning or artificial character, although of course a mystic significance is ascribed to each. The Aitareya Brahmanam is however of some value, as it illustrates the Brahmanical sacrifices of animals which were practised in that early age of Brahmanical ascendancy which partly preceded and partly overlapped the age of Buddhism. The Sanskrit text of the Aitareya Brahmanam, together with an English translation, has recently been published by Dr Haug, of Bombay.

standard by which to clear the events which belong to that age from the Brahmanical husk which they subsequently seem to have received from the hands of the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana.

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The Vedic people, whose wants and aspirations are expressed in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, are described as "fair-complexioned" Aryas, or Aryans, who had migrated at a remote period from some colder climate in central Asia, and subsequently settled in the Punjab, or "Land of the Five Rivers," in the north-western quarter of India, from whence, in the course of ages, they gradually pushed towards the east and south. They seem to have been called "fair-complexioned" in opposition to the darker complexioned tribes who had previously settled in India, and who are generally regarded as aborigines, and alluded to under a variety of names, such as Rákshasas, Asuras, Dánavas, Dasyus, and Daityas.³

The Vedic people.

The white-complexioned Aryans of the Punjab.

The black complexioned settlers who preceded the Aryans, and who are regarded as aborigines.

³ Whilst the term Aryan is applied to the Vedic invaders of India, the so-called aborigines are generally regarded as a Turanian race. These terms, Aryan and Turanian, are so frequently used that some explanation of their opposition seems necessary. In language the difference is one not only of roots but of grammars. In race the Aryan comprises the Greek, the Roman, and the modern European, whose tendencies have been to form themselves into national and political communities, to marry one wife, and to worship one supreme and spiritual deity. The Turanian, on the other hand, is represented by the modern Tartars, whose tendencies are apparently the reverse; they have little national or political cohesion, marry one or more wives without much sentiment, and worship gods and heroes without much idea of spiritual existence beyond that implied in the notion of ghosts and demons.

So far the opposition is intelligible, and the application of the terms Aryan and Turanian is convenient for the purpose of distinguishing one class of tendencies from another. But when the terms are broadly applied to families of mankind, and regarded as characteristics by which to distinguish the members of one great family from those of another, they are apt to mislead. Both the Aryan and the Turanian elements spring from a common human nature, and do not arise from a difference of instinct but from a difference of training, or rather a difference in the past and present conditions of national existence. Men speaking Aryan languages may abandon themselves to polygamous aspirations and to a superstitious reverence for material existences; and in like manner the Turanian may be

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PART I.

Similarity between the patriarchal life, indicated in the Vedic hymns and that indicated in the Mahá Bhárata.

Prayers for rain, abundant harvests, prolific cattle, bodily vigour, long life, numerous progeny, etc.

Vedic deities mere personifications of the abstract powers of nature.

Confusion in the personifications.

Distinction between Indra, the sovereign god who sent the rain, and Varuna, the god of water, or the ocean.

The simple patriarchal life of the Aryans is indicated in the Vedic hymns precisely as it is depicted in the main tradition of the Mahá Bhárata. They were a people partly pastoral and partly agricultural; keeping cows for the sake of their milk, butter, and curds, and sowing the land with grain. They also seem to have had some acquaintance with the manufacture of weapons and coats of mail, and to have sometimes undertaken sea-voyages for the sake of gain. These people prayed to their gods, as such a people might be expected to pray, for plenty of rain, abundant harvests, and prolific cattle; for bodily vigour, long life, numerous progeny, and protection against all foes and robbers, such as the cattle-lifting aborigines. Their gods appear to have been mere abstractions; personifications of those powers of nature on whom they relied for good harvests. They wanted seasonable rain, warmth, and fresh breezes. Accordingly, they prayed to the god of rain, the god of fire and light, and the god of wind. But from the very first, there appears to have been some confusion in these personifications, which led both to a multiplicity of deities, and the confounding together of different deities. Thus the conception of the god of rain was Indra, and he was identified with the firmament as well as with the unseen power which smote the rain-cloud and brought down the waters; and so important was the acquisition of rain in due season, that Indra is regarded as the sovereign of the gods, and subsequently became a type of sovereignty. But rain

led to feel that his highest bliss on earth is derived from his marriage to one wife, and that the most elevated form of worship is that of one God,—the omniscient, the unseen, and the supreme.

and water are frequently different things, and thus there was another, and perchance an older, deity, named Varuna, who was particularly worshipped as the god of the waters, and deity of the ocean. Again, the conception of the god of fire was Agni, and Agni was not only the flame which burns upon the hearth or altar, but also the lightning which manifests itself in the clouds, and even the light of the sun, moon, and stars. Yet both the sun and moon appear as separate and individual deities, the former under the name of Surya, and the latter under the name of Soma or Chandra. Again, there seems to have been a striking difference as regards wind. The god of wind, or air, was Váyu; but the different breezes which bring on or accompany the rain, are called Maruts, and are represented as the attendants of Indra. Thus, whilst there is a Pantheon of separate and individual deities, the conception of one deity frequently overlapped the conceptions of other deities; and whilst the more prominent powers of nature, such as water, fire, and wind, were separately individualized, a monotheistic tendency was always at work, ascribing the attributes of every deity to each one in turn. Of these deities, the following appear to be the most important:—

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PART I.

Conception of
Agni, as the god
of light as well
as of fire.

Separated deifica-
tion of the Sun
and Moon.

Distinction be-
tween Váyu, the
god of wind, and
the Maruts, or
breezes.

Leading Vedic
deities.

Rain.

Indra, god of the firmament.

Indra.

Varuna, god of the waters.

Varuna.

Fire.

Agni, god of fire.

Agni.

Súrya, the sun.

Súrya.

Soma, or Chandra, the Moon.

Soma, or Chan-
dra.

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Air.

Vāyu.
Maruts.

Yama, the god of
death, or judge
of the dead.

Vāyu, the god of wind.

Maruts, the breezes who attended upon Indra.

To these must be added a god of death, or judge of the dead, who was known as Yama. The characteristics of Yama as a Vedic deity would open up a large field of inquiry; but the subject at present is vague and speculative. In the Epics, Yama appears distinctly as a judge of the dead; and men who are about to die are frequently said to be about to go to the mansions of Yama.

Fanciful personifications which appear to have been regarded as minor deities.

The foregoing deities appear to have been the prominent gods in the Vedic Pantheon; but yet there are many fanciful personifications to whom hymns were addressed, such as Earth,⁴ Sky, Food, Wine, Months, Seasons, Day, Night, and Dawn. The religious ideas connected with these personifications are difficult of apprehension; and it can only be inferred that the abstractions were regarded as spiritual existences, and worshipped accordingly. Perchance a better acquaintance with Rig-Veda may serve to solve the problem, for at present philologists appear to be occasionally divided as regards the true meaning of passages; and, indeed, seem inclined to depend upon the interpretation of commentators who flourished thousands of years after the composition of the hymns, and when the national mind had been entirely recast in a Brahmanical mould.⁵

⁴ In a later and more mystic age, Earth became personified as the cow; but the conception of Earth in the Rig-Veda is more simple and primitive.

⁵ The chronology of the Vedas is still a subject of discussion, but the data are vague and unsatisfactory. The Rig-Veda has been referred to about the twelfth or fifteenth century before Christ, and would thus synchronize with the Hebrew

The form of worship which prevailed amongst the Vedic Aryans, throws still further light upon the simplicity of ancient rites and ideas. Indeed, their whole religious system may be regarded as a child-like make-believe. They appear to have had no idols and no temples, but either performed their sacrifice in the open air, or else in a sacrificial chamber set apart in each dwelling. The so-called sacrifice was nothing more than the preparation of such simple viands as clarified butter, curds, wine, cakes, and parched grain; and the presentation of such articles to the different deities through the medium of fire. In other words, having deified certain abstractions, they personified such abstractions as beings with human wants and aspirations; and then invoked the gods with hymns to attend and partake of the food which had been prepared for them, and made believe that the gods accepted the invitation. Moreover, the offerings do not appear to have been always of a bloodless character, for Indra is described as rejoicing in roasted buffalo, and it is certain that a horse was occasionally sacrificed either to Indra or the Sun.

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Child-like form
of worship.

No idols or tem-
ples.

Presentation of
simple articles
of food to the
different deities
through the me-
dium of fire.

The gods have-
ted with human
wants and aspira-
tions, and in-
voked to partake
of food.

Flesh offerings.

These religious rites were thus intimately connected with eating and drinking, and appear to have been performed at dawn, noon, and sunset. Ac-

Religious rites
connected with
eating and drink-
ing, and per-
formed at
dawn, noon,
and sunset.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

Connection of
cooking with
sacrifice.

ness of the
ations va-
with the im-
portance of the
occasion.
Daily meals.

Grand enter-
tainments.

cordingly, it is easy to conceive that they may have formed an accompaniment to every meal, and may have been regarded almost as a part of the cookery. Thus the hymns may have been the expression of the aspirations of a simple people whilst the food was being cooked; and the so-called sacrifice may have been nothing more than the propitiation of the gods by the presentation of a portion of the victuals and liquors. Indeed, the preparations for cooking and sacrifice would be much the same. A fire would be kindled upon the ground, or upon a raised altar; the food would be either baked, or toasted, or boiled in kettles; bundles of a common but sacred species of grass, known as Kusa grass, would be sprinkled all round the altar for the make-believe gods to sit upon, and upon which the worshippers also sat themselves; ghee and soma juice⁶ would be presented to the fire in ladles; and the god of fire would be invoked in a Vedic hymn, either to accept the offering, or to carry it away in flame to the other gods; after which the worshippers themselves partook of the meal which had been provided. Of course, such preparations would vary with the importance of the occasion. At the daily meal it may have been deemed sufficient to chaunt a few strains, and sprinkle a little ghee on the fire and grass; but on a set occasion, such as a marriage, an installation of a chieftain, or an assertion of sovereignty, the soma juice would be elaborately

⁶ Wilson's *Rig-Veda*, Vol. I. *Introduction*, p. xxiii. The Soma plant is the acid *Asclepias*, or *Sarcostema viminalis*, which yields to expression a copious milky juice of a mild nature and sub-acid taste. It does not appear to have been used in sacrifices until it had gone through the process of fermentation, and had become a strong spirituous beverage. *Ib.* p. 6, *note*.

prepared in large quantities, and presented to the invisible gods with curds, cakes, ghee, and milk; and the so-called sacrifice would be followed by a great feast amongst the guests assembled. In the hymns recited on such festivals, the worshippers would exult in the joy and satisfaction which the gods would feel in quaffing the soma, or in consuming the choice viands which had been prepared. In one vigorous hymn it is said that the gods, filled with food, are as impatient to enjoy the soma as bridegrooms long for their brides.⁷ Sometimes a deity is supposed to be attracted by the grateful sound of the stone and mortar by which the soma juice was expressed from the plant; or by the musical noise of the churning-sticks by which the wine was apparently stirred up and mixed with curds; and the eager invokers implore the god not to turn as, — the dwelling of any other worshipper, but as, and to them only, and drink the libation which they had prepared, and reserve for them all his favours and benefits. Indeed, the relations between the Vedic Aryans and their deities appear to have been of a child-like and filial character; the evils which they suffered they ascribed to some offence of omission or commission which had been given to a deity; whilst the good which they received was in like manner ascribed to his kindness and favour. In order, however, the more fully to apprehend the general scope and character of the religious ideas of the Vedic Aryans, it may be advisable to

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INDIA.
PART I.

Exultation of
the worshippers
in the gratifica-
tion of the gods.

The deities sup-
posed to be at-
tracted by the
noise of the mor-
tar and churn-
ing sticks.

Relations be-
tween the Vedic
Aryans and their
deities resem-
bling those be-
tween children
and a father.

Necessity for a
further develop-
ment of the cha-
racteristics of
the leading dei-
ties.

⁷ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 83, v. 2. Wilson's Translation. It may here be noted that all references are made to Wilson's translation of the Rig-Veda, unless otherwise stated.

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indicate, with a greater degree of detail, the leading characteristics of those deities who are prominent both in the Epics and the Rig-Veda.

Characteristics
of Indra, or the
god of the firma-
ment.

The most prominent and popular deity in the Vedic ritual appears to be Indra, the giver of rain, and subsequently regarded as the sovereign of the gods. This deity, more than any of the others, is represented in the character of a human hero, rather than as a spiritual divinity, or, in other words, is more distinctly and intensely personified. It is true that he appears prominently as the god of the firmament, the hurler of the thunderbolt, who *smote the rain-cloud and brought down the waters*; and his worshippers implore him for blessings, such as robust health and plentiful harvests, long life and numerous progeny, and other good things of this world, which none but deity can ^{and so}. But in many of the hymns he is represented as a warrior chief, endowed perhaps with superhuman strength and energy, but still with more of the human than of the miraculous type, and who especially shielded and protected those who were his friends, and smote and destroyed those who were his foes.⁸ Moreover, he is frequently addressed in familiar terms, and in tones of remonstrance, which are incompatible with the idea of an omniscient and invisible deity. He is supposed to take especial delight in quaffing the soma juice; and his capacity in drinking it is celebrated with all the sympathetic praise and exaggerated description with which the northern bards loved to celebrate the Bacchanalian exploits of their

Attributes of a
human hero su-
peradded to
those of the god
of the firma-
ment.

Frequently ad-
dressed in fami-
liar terms.

Partiality for
strong drink.

⁸ Comp. Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymns 51 and 55, for the human character of Indra.

herpes of the olden time. Indeed, he is hymned as the discoverer of the soma plant, which was said to have been brought from heaven, and to have previously lain hidden in a rock like the nestling of a bird.² In many passages however, as already stated, his existence seems to have been spiritualized until he becomes a mere personified idea of the god of the sky or the firmament, and the winds are declared to be his followers, with whom he battles against the clouds in order to release the rain. Even in this capacity the popular imagination still delighted in depicting him in a human form, driving furiously in a chariot drawn by clamping and foaming steeds; as the hero and protector of the fair-complexioned Aryans, who worshipped him with acceptable hymns and large oblations, and the enemy and destroyer of the black-complexioned aborigines,—the Rākshasas, the Dasyus, the Asuras, the Krishnas, and the Pisachis,—who neither sung his praises nor offered him the delicious and inebriating soma. He was thus a national deity, showering gifts upon his worshippers, but trampling upon those who gave him no libations, as a strong man tramples upon a coiled-up snake. He slew his enemies by thousands, and destroyed their cities by hundreds; he brought back the spoil, and recovered the cows which they had carried away. His worshippers called upon him to ha ten, assail, subdue; to destroy his enemies with his thunderbolt; to smite the rain-cloud Vritra and bring down the waters.³ “Slayer of Vritra, ascend thy chariot,

memory of
1848.
Part I

the name
of the
the name of the
the name of the

the name of the
the name of the
the name of the
the name of the

It is the form
of the Aryans,
and the of the
the name of the

Character of the
Vritra, the name of the
the name of the

the name of the
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the name of the
the name of the

for thy horses have been yoked by prayer; may the sound of the stone that bruises the soma attract thy mind towards us.”¹¹ “Showerer of benefits, destroyer of cities, propitiated by our new songs, reward us with gratifying blessings.”¹² In one hymn the worshippers are naïvely represented as saying:—“Quaff the somā juices, satiate thy appetite, and then fix thy mind on the wealth that is to be given to us.”¹³ In another Indra is told that the minds of his worshippers adhere to him, as affectionate wives to a loving husband.¹⁴ Thus there are verses which describe him as a mere human chief, a strong man rejoicing in his strength, a warrior delighting in war, as well as in eating and drinking; and there are others in which his deeds and attributes are lauded with an Oriental exaggeration which renders his deification complete:—

Invocations to
Indra as the Supreme Being.

“He who as soon as born is the first of the deities, who has done honour to the gods by his exploits; he at whose might heaven and earth are alarmed, and who is known by the greatness of his strength; he, men, is Indra.

“He who fixed firm the moving earth; who tranquillized the incensed mountains; who spread the spacious firmament; who consolidated the heavens; he, men, is Indra.

“He who, having destroyed Ahi,¹⁵ set free the seven rivers; who recovered the cows detained by Bala; who generated fire in the clouds; who is invincible in battle; he, men, is Indra.

“He under whose control are horses and cattle, and villages, and all chariots; who gave birth to the sun and to

¹¹ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 87, v. 3.

¹² Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 130, v. 10.

¹³ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 54, v. 9.

¹⁴ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 62, v. 11.

¹⁵ Ahi is another name for Vritra, or the rain-cloud. Sometimes Vritra, or Ahi, is represented as a heavy cloud charged with water, and sometimes as a chief among the aboriginal tribes with whom the Aryas are at war.

the dawn; and who is the leader of the waters; he, men, is **Indra**.

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"He to whom heaven and earth bow down; he at whose sight the mountains are appalled; he who is the drinker of the soma juice, the firm of frame, the adamant armed, the wielder of the thunderbolt; he, men, is Indra."

"May we envelope thee with acceptable praises, as youthful husbands are embraced by their wives!"

Another famous Vedic deity, and one perhaps who is superior to Indra, although he never acquired the sovereignty of the gods, is Agni, or Fire. Even to the eye of the man of science there is something spiritual in the varied manifestations of fire, and something divine in its powers of destruction and purification. To this must be added the fact that in colder climates, like that from which the Vedic Aryans appear to have emigrated, the presence of fire is associated with home pleasures and family ties, and the domestic hearth becomes a vivid conception embodying pleasant memories and warm affections. But to man in a primitive state of existence, the presence of fire excites feelings of reverence. Its powers raise it to the rank of a deity whose operations are felt and seen. It burns and it consumes. It dispels the darkness, and with it drives away, not only the imaginary horrors which the mind associates with darkness, but also the real horrors, such as beasts of prey. In its lower manifestations as mere heat, it cooks the food and warms the dwelling, and it enables the artisan to forge weapons for the warrior, or to fashion jewelled ornaments to enliven the

Characteristics
of Agni or Fire.

Mysterious at-
tributes of Fire.

Family associa-
tion connected
with fire in cold
climates.

Reverence ex-
cited amongst
a primitive peo-
ple by the pres-
ence of fire.

General utility
of fire.

¹⁶ Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 12, v. 1, 2, 3, 7, 13.

¹⁷ Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 16, v. 8.

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Language of
praise to be dis-
tinguished from
the expression
of thought.

called the ruler of the universe, the lord of men, the wise king, the father, the brother, the son, the friend of men; whilst the powers and even the names of the other deities are distinctly applied to this god.²⁷ Care must however be taken not to confound the language of praise with the expression of thought. The extravagance of Oriental adulation will permit an Asiatic courtier to address some petty chief or Raja as the king of kings, but this by no means implies an idea of universal empire. At the same time, the language of praise, eager to propitiate and boundless in expression, may have to some extent originated that later conception of the one Supreme Being, the God above all gods, which is undoubtedly to be found in the Vedas.

Indra and Agni,
the chief gods of
the Rig-Veda.

These two deities—Indra and Agni, Rain and Fire—are the chief gods which were worshipped by the Vedic Aryans. In the hymns they are sometimes identified with each other, and sometimes they are associated in the same hymn; but even as individuals more hymns were apparently addressed to each than to any other divine being in the Vedic pantheon. The remaining gods, however, though less prominent and perhaps less popular, are still well worthy of attention. They comprise the personifications of water, and the sun and moon, air and the winds, all of which were associated with the ideas of deity.

Characteristics
of Varuna, or
Water.

The god of waters was named Varuna.²⁸ Next

of the poet, and he only who is to fulfil their desires stands in full light before the eyes of the worshippers." Hist. of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 532.

²⁷ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymns 1 and 2. Comp. Max Müller, Hist. of Sanskrit Lit. p. 533.

²⁸ Upon this point there is some obscurity. Varuna was undoubtedly regarded as the deity of water, but the name is in some verses applied to the sun and even

to fire, perhaps water has always occupied the most prominent place in the religious worship of nations in general. It purifies, and it is an emblem of purity; and is as necessary in every household as fire. At the same time, the ever-flowing current of a great river awakens ideas of life and infinity; of a past and a future; of going on ever and ever, we know not whence and we know not where, but ever flowing. Springs and rivers, however, are generally separated into individual abstractions, which are personified as divine beings; and the highest conception of one universal god of the waters seems to have been gathered from a familiarity with the sea. Thus amongst a maritime people, the god of the ocean, the lord of tempests, the ruler of the rushing, boiling waves, ever occupies an important place in the sphere of religious thought; and here it should be remarked that the Vedic Aryans were evidently acquainted with the sea, for the hymns contain allusions to merchants, to sea voyages, and to ships with a hundred oars. In a more material or credulous age this deity might be depicted as a mere monster, half fish and half human; but in the higher Aryan conception he is represented as a spiritual existence, powerful to destroy but mighty to save, that could sink the strong man into the depths of the sea, or bear him in safety to the shore. In a later stage the conception rises higher and higher, until a deity is shadowed forth that rewards goodness and punishes sin. The following hymn to Varuna, felicitously translated by Prof. Max Müller, exhibits this deity in the two-fold character of controlling tem-

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART I.

Mysterious attributes of water.

Water a purifier and a household necessity.

Ideas awakened by the currents of great rivers.

Springs and rivers generally separated into individual abstractions.

Conception of a god of the ocean.

Distinction between a material conception of a sea monster, and the Aryan conception of a spiritual existence.

Varuna considered as a deity who rewards goodness and punishes sin.

Deep religious feeling in a hymn addressed to Varuna.

to the personification of day. In the Epics he is invariably regarded as water, and is emphatically the god of the ocean.

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PART I.

pests and punishing sin ; and in so doing indicates a tone of religious feeling not so far removed from modern ideas as might have been expected :—

“ Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !

“ If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !

“ Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone to the wrong shore ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !

“ Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !

“ Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy.”²³

Characteristics
of Sūrya, or the
Sun.

Prominence of
the Sun in all an-
cient religions.

Sūrya, or the Sun, is another important Vedic deity ; and indeed seems under different names to have always held a high place amongst the primitive gods of every nation, by virtue of its prominence in the heavens, and the extent to which its influence is felt upon earth. Its daily course and its annual course, its welcome rising in the morning and its glorious setting in the evening, must all have excited the keenest curiosity amongst a child-like and inquisitive people ; and, at the same time, the imagination alone was left to account for the existence of phenomena which in a non-scientific age are altogether beyond human ken. Thus it seems extremely probable that one of the earliest efforts of poetical genius was to personify the Sun as the deity of light, travelling through the blue ether in a golden chariot which all men might see, drawn however by steeds which were invisible to the out-

Personification
of the Sun one
of the earliest
efforts of ancient
bards.

The golden cha-
riot and invis-
ible steeds.

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INDIA.
PART I.Attributes of
Surya similar to
those of Agni.Sūrya a distinct
personification
from Agni.Sūrya regarded
as the mythical
ancestor of the
Solar race of
Arydhya.
Sūrya regarded
as a divine spirit
pervading all
things.

The Gayatri.

The twelve Adis-
tas.

ward eye, but which were easily assumed to be white, resplendent, and beautiful beyond expression. In the Vedas the attributes of this deity are frequently the same as those of Agni, especially that of originating and diffusing light; but still the Sun stands forward as a deity altogether distinct from Fire, when described as journeying through the firmament in an upward and downward course, and especially in his character of measuring days and nights. This god is apparently addressed under a variety of names, such as Sūrya, Savitri, Mitra, Aryaman, and others; but in the Epics he is chiefly known by the name of Sūrya, and was regarded as the great ancestor of the solar race who appear in the Rāmāyana. In the higher conceptions the Divine Sun is regarded and invoked as a spirit pervading all things, as the soul of the world and supporter of the universe;²⁹ and this idea is said to be indicated in the celebrated Vedic verse known as the Gayatri, which down to the present day still forms a part of the daily devotions of the Brāhman.³¹

In connection with the worship of the Sun, there are some obscure deities, known as the

²⁹ Rīg-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 73, v. 3.

³¹ Rīg-Veda, Mand. III. Hymn 62, v. 10. The original Sanskrit of this verse appears to be simple enough. Wilson's translation is as follows:—"We meditate on that desirable light of the divine Savitri, who influences our pious rites." Sir William Jones's paraphrastic translation was as follows:—"Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat." Colebrooke proposes the following version:—"Earth! Sky! Heaven! Let us meditate on (these and on) the most excellent light and power of that generous, sportive, and resplendent Sun, (praying that) it may guide our intellects." From information gathered personally from educated Brāhmanas, the writer has been led to infer that Colebrooke's translation exhibits the nearest approximation to the religious ideas involved in the words. The verse is apparently an invocation to the several deities who are implored by the worshipper to aid his intellect in the apprehension and adoration of God.

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Adityas.³² These are said to be the sons of Aditi, who is apparently identified with the universe.³³

It is not sufficiently clear how these Adityas were regarded by the Vedic worshippers, but at a later period they were represented as being twelve in number, and were apparently identified with the twelve signs of the zodiac, or rather with the sun in twelve different characters, each character corresponding to the sign through which it passed in succession. The most important fact connected with this circle of divinities is that the god Vishnu, so prominent in the later mythology, appears in the Rig-Veda merely as one of the Adityas. Also Aryaman, Mitra, Varuna, and Savitri, are identified both with the Sun and with certain of the Adityas.

The god Vishnu originally an Aditya.

Characteristics of the minor Vedic deities.

Of the remaining Vedic deities but little remains to be said. Their individual character may be easily inferred from their names, whilst their form of worship appears to differ in no way from that of the deities already described. Soma, or the Moon, which appears in some Pantheons as a female divinity corresponding to the male personification of the Sun, is chiefly celebrated in the Vedas in connection with the soma plant; but it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, indifferently under the names of Chandra and Soma, as the mythical progenitor of the great Lunar race of Bhárata. Two obscure deities, known as the Aswins, are apparently a personifica-

Soma, or Chandra, or the Moon.

ected in the as with the in a plant.

regarded as the mythical progenitor of the Lunar race of Bhárata.

The two Aswins.

³² Comp. Wilson, Rig-Veda, Vol. I. Introd. p. xxxiii. Also Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Part IV. p. 101.

³³ The Vedic verse is as follows :—" Aditi is heaven ; Aditi is the firmament ; Aditi is mother, father, and son ; Aditi is all the gods ; Aditi is the five classes of men ; Aditi is generation and birth." Upon this verse Sayana remarks :—" Aditi is hymned as the same with the universe." Wilson, Rig-Veda, Vol. I. p. 230, and note.

tion of light and moisture, and as sons of the Sun seem sometimes to be identified and multiplied as the sun's rays.²¹ They are invoked in several hymns, but do not appear to have been invested with any peculiar attributes, beyond that of being young and handsome, and riding on horses. The deifications of Vāyu, or the air, and of the Maruts, or the winds, are frequently invoked, in many instances, in conjunction with Indra and Agni. The Maruts especially, whose power was manifest, are described in such figurative language as is usually applied to the strong and impetuous winds by poets of all nations and ages. In this way they are depicted as roaring amongst the forest trees, and blowing up the clouds for rain; but they are also personified in the imaginations of the Vedic psalmists as youthful warriors bearing lances on their shoulders, delighting in the soma juice like Indra, and, like him, the bestowers of benefits upon their worshippers.

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Vāyu.

The Maruts.

The next Vedic deity who may be taken into consideration is Ushas, or the personification of the dawn. This divinity scarcely appears in the Epics, and can hardly have been extensively worshipped, but yet is especially deserving of notice from the remarkable contrast which the conception presents to those of other gods, and especially to the idea of Indra. In the place of the impetuous warrior, strong and drunk with wine, and cleaving the clouds with his thunderbolt, we have the vision of early morning, of the first pale flush of light, imaged as a pure and lovely maiden awakening a sleeping

Characteristics
of Ushas, or the
dawn.

Contrast be-
tween the con-
ception of Ushas
and that of In-
dra.

²¹ In the Epics they are said to have been the physicians of the gods, and are constantly represented as twins.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART I. world as a young wife awakens her children. This poetical conception seems to have had peculiar charms for the old Vedic bards; and, in truth, the dawn of early morning in India is singularly grateful to the feelings, and in the mind of the Vedic worshipper was associated with early prayer as well as with early duties. In addition to the refreshing coolness and delightful stillness of the hour, there is a peculiar whiteness in the atmosphere, not so expressive as moonlight, but infinitely more delicate and more suggestive of innocence and purity. Thus the night with all the horrors of darkness—the fear of ghosts, demons, snakes, tigers, and midnight robbers—is supposed to have passed away before the rising of this white-robed maiden, the first in all the world who is awake, and the first to appear at the invocation of the gods. But notwithstanding the unsubstantial character of the original personification, it nevertheless became in many hymns a vivid conception of a deity. As a mere female, Ushas is likened to a young bride, with perhaps more warmth of painting than would suit modern taste:—

Poetry of the conception of Ushas.

Associations connected with the dawn in India.

Vedic hymns addressed to Ushas as a maiden.

“Goddess, manifest in person like a maiden, thou goest to the resplendent and beautiful sun; and, like a youthful bride before her husband, thou uncoverest thy bosom with a smile.”³⁵

Vedic ideas of Ushas as a deity.

But as a divinity, the language respecting Ushas is much more elevated:—

“Ushas, daughter of heaven, dawn upon us with riches; diffuser of light, dawn upon us with abundant food; beautiful goddess, dawn upon us with wealth of cattle.”³⁶

³⁵ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 123, v. 1.

³⁶ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 48, v. 1.

"This auspicious Ushas has borne and her vehicles from afar, above the rising of the sun, and she comes gloriously up, on high with a hundred chariots."¹

"First of all the world is she awakes, triumphing over the dreary darkness: the mighty, the giver of light, from on high she be-holds all things: ever youthful, ever reviving, she comes first to the invocation."²

Such were the chief gods of the Aryans, and to them may be added some others less prominent, such as the personifications of Food, of Day and Night, and of the Seasons. These require no special description, inasmuch as they are little more than practical personifications; and probably at the period of their composition they were as little connected with religious worship as the songs of Hafiz were connected with the sentiments of Muhomedan devotion. These creations of the fancy have ever been the favourite product of the Aryan mind, and thus the Vedic "Hymn to Pitri, the Divinity of Food,"³ is even surpassed in intensity of personification by Burns's ballad of "John Barleycorn," and Tennyson's exquisite poem on the "Death of the Old Year."⁴

The Vedic idea of the personification of poetry.

Comparison of the Vedic and modern personifications.

Having thus sketched generally the individual character of the leading deities of the Aryans as they appear in the Rig-Veda, it may be advisable to glance at that conception of One Supreme Being, as in all and above all, which finds full expression

Vedic conception of the One Supreme Being.

¹ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 48, v. 7.

² Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 123, v. 2.

³ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 157.

⁴ The great master in the power of personifying abstractions, until they become objects of actual interest, is John Bunyan; an interest however which is derived more from the religious experiences of the author than from a large knowledge of human nature.

in the Vedic hymns. Upon this point the following passages will be found very significant:—

“Who has seen the primeval being at the time of his being born; what is that endowed with substance which the unsubstantial sustains; from earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul; who may repair to the sage to ask this?”⁴¹

“What is that One alone, who has upheld these six spheres in the form of an unborn?”⁴²

The following hymn, translated by Professor Max Müller, still further expresses the conception of monotheism, and indeed seems to indicate that the idea itself is a necessary idea forced upon the mind by a thoughtful consideration of the phenomena of the universe.⁴³

Grand monotheistic hymn translated by Professor Max Müller.

“In the beginning there arose the Source of golden light: He was the only born lord of all that is. He established the earth, and this sky:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

“He who gives life, He who gives strength; whose blessing all the bright gods desire; whose shadow is immortality; whose shadow is death:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

“He who through His power is the only King of the breathing and awakening world: He who governs all, man and beast:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

“He whose power these snowy mountains, whose power

⁴¹ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 144, v. 4.

⁴² Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 144, v. 6.

⁴³ The translation which follows has been borrowed from Mr Max Müller's History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 569. That eloquent scholar is perhaps mistaken in alluding to the idea as “an instinctive monotheism.” The theory that the Aryan nations may possess an instinct which is denied to the Turanian peoples seems untenable. An instinct is an element of human nature, and not a mere characteristic of a race; and it appears more probable that what are called characteristics of a race, arise from peculiarities of development and history rather than from any original diversity in human nature.

the sea proclaims, with the distant river : He whom these regions are as it were His two arms :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

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“He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm : He through whom the heaven was established, nay, the highest heaven : He who measured out the light in the air :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up, trembling inwardly : He over whom the rising sun shines forth :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the only life of the bright gods :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice, He *who is God above all gods* :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“May He not destroy us, He, the creator of the earth ; or He, the righteous, who created the heaven ; He who also created the bright and mighty waters :—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?”

The true conception of marriage, involving the idea of the union of one woman to one man, also finds expression in the Vedas. Husbands and wives in twos and twos are described as presenting their oblations together ;⁴⁴ and in one hymn which dwells upon the duality of the two Aswins, the pair of deities are compared with pairs of almost everything that runs in couples, including a husband and a wife, and two lips uttering sweet sounds.⁴⁵

Vedic conception of marriage.

⁴⁴ Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 131, v. 3. Also Mand. Hymn 43.

⁴⁵ Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 39. There is however an exceptional passage in which a young Rishi named Kakshivat celebrates the generosity of a Raja who had given him his ten daughters in marriage. (Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 126.) This reference to polygamy as well as two hymns relating to a horse sacrifice, will be considered hereafter.

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Subsequent decay of the Vedic religion in the Brahmanic age.

Changes in circumstances and geographical position.

Existence of a military class and institution of caste.

Origin of the caste system in the period between the Vedic and Brahmanic ages.

Such, then, were the leading characteristics of the principal deities of the Aryans in the old Vedic age, when the new colonists were still dwelling in the neighbourhood of the five rivers. During the subsequent age of Brahmanism, the spiritual conceptions and aspirations passed in a great measure away; a new dynasty of deities arose; and the gods of the Vedas lost their hold upon the national sympathies, and shrivelled more and more into human heroes with human instincts and passions. Meantime the circumstances of the people, and their geographical position, had undergone a great and significant change. In the Vedic age the Aryan people were a band of agriculturists and herdsmen, and were still dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Punjab; but in the Brahmanic age they had become a conquering power, and had made their way down the fertile valleys of the Ganges and Jumná, and established kingdoms which are still famous in ancient story. This period of conquest implies the existence of a large military class; and in connection with this subject it may be remarked that the most significant change which appears to have taken place about this time was the institution of caste. In the Vedic age there appears to have been no direct traces of a caste system; but in the Brahmanic age the distribution of the people into castes is one of the most prominent features, and this caste system has prevailed more or less down to the present day. Thus the caste system seems to have arisen in the period which intervened between the Vedic and Brahmanic age; in other words, between the time when the Aryans appeared as simple colonists in the land of the five rivers, and the time

when they had become a conquering power, and established Aryan empires at Delhi, Oude, Tírhút, and Bahar, under the ancient names of Bhárata, Kosala, Mithila, and Magadhá. The question accordingly remains for consideration of how far the circumstances which attend the invasion of a well-populated country by a band of foreign emigrants, and the subsequent establishment of the settlers as a dominant and imperial power, are calculated to lead to the introduction of caste, and the perpetuation of a caste system for ages afterwards. This question is of more general importance than is generally supposed. The tendency of all foreign conquests is to create a caste feeling between the conquerors and the conquered; and this feeling becomes intensified when the difference is one not merely of political relations, but of colour, language, and religion. In the progress of another century, for instance, from the present date, the old caste antagonism amongst the Hindús may in some measure have passed away; but in its place there will be a caste feeling between Europeans, East Indians, and Natives, altogether different from that exclusiveness in different ranks of society which prevails amongst European nations.

Many of the difficulties connected with this interesting subject of inquiry will be cleared up, as far as the Hindús are concerned, by means of the evidence furnished by the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. But still it appears necessary for the continuous identification of the Aryan people, and their separation from the Turanian populations by whom they were apparently surrounded, and with whom they must to some extent have intermingled, to

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Question of how far the establishment of the Aryans, as a conquering power, was calculated to lead to the introduction of caste.

Importance of the question from the general tendency of foreign conquest to create a caste feeling.

Question of how far the elements of an opposition of classes are to be found in the Rig-Veda.

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ascertain which of the castes had an Aryan origin, and how far the elements of an opposition of classes is to be found in the Rig-Veda.

Four castes existing in the Brahmanic age.

In the Brahmanic age the great body of the people were divided into four castes, as follows:—

Bráhmans.

1st, Bráhmans, or priests; sometimes called preceptors.

Kshatriyas, or Rajas.

2nd, Kshatriyas, or soldiers; also called Rajas, or sovereigns.

Vaisyas.

3rd, Vaisyas, or merchants and farmers.

Súdras.

4th, Súdras, a servile class who tilled the soil.

Outcastes and slaves.

Below these was a nondescript population who were treated as outcastes, and who appear as the slaves of the Súdras. Of the four castes, the three first mentioned are distinguished from the fourth caste in a very particular manner. The Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, are each invested at a certain age with the sacred thread, from which circumstance they are entitled the "twice born," to distinguish them from the Súdras, who are not permitted to wear the thread. This line of demarcation between the three twice-born castes and the Súdras is far broader according to caste ideas than that between the Bráhman and the Kshatriya, or the Kshatriya and the Vaisya. Accordingly the most plausible conjecture appears to be that the three twice-born castes may be identified with the descendants of the Aryans of the Rig-Veda; whilst the Súdras, who form the mass of the population, may be regarded as the descendants of a Turanian people, who settled in India ages before the Aryans, and at some remote period contemporary perhaps with the earliest Egyptian dynasties. As to the outcastes, known in the south of India by the general name of Pariahs, they

Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas distinguished from the Súdras by the thread, and the designation of "twice born."

Hypothesis that the three twice-born castes are descendants of the Aryans of the Rig-Veda, and that the Súdras are a pre-Aryan people.

Antiquity of the Pariahs, or outcastes.

probably were the descendants of an aboriginal people possessing a still more remote antiquity, who were originally conquered by the Súdras, and of whom some may have escaped to the hills and become the ancestors of the existing hill tribes.

Now although no caste system appears in the Rig-Veda, the hymns certainly present glimpses of three distinct classes of worshippers. One class, the most prominent of all, comprised a people who evidently possessed strong religious instincts. They prayed in earnest language to primitive deities for such simple benefits as colonists in a new country might be expected to crave; namely, seasonable rains, abundant harvests, prolific cattle, and plenty of children. They were certainly a peaceful community, and appear to have been altogether indisposed for war, for they prayed not for victory but for protection. They do not even seem to have sacrificed to any god of war, unless Indra may be regarded as such; but their offerings were exclusively made to what might be termed family or domestic deities, who were supposed to supply the daily wants of a simple but contemplative people. Moreover, with the exception of the soma wine, which was especially quaffed by Indra, there was nothing of an orgiastic character in their worship. They invoked the gods, and propitiated them with such bloodless offerings as butter, curds, and milk. Again, whilst they implored the gods for protection, and lauded their exploits against robbers, cattle-lifters, and other enemies, they manifested no warlike spirit, no direct aspiration for revenge, such as would find expression in the prayers or hymns of a people devoted to deeds of arms. Indeed, it might almost be said that the flow of religious feeling which

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Three distinct classes of worshippers indicated in the Rig-Veda.

1st. A peaceful and religious class, the ancestors of the Bráhmans.

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runs through the greater number of the Vedic hymns, is altogether at variance with that exultant delight in blood and slaughter which is generally manifested in the ballads of a warlike people. Altogether the hymns of the Rig-Veda, as far as peaceful pursuits are concerned, are of such a character that it is not difficult to identify the people who gave them utterance with the ancestors of the later Brāhmins.

2nd, A military class, the ancestors of the Kshatriyas.

Marks of difference between the peaceful and the military class.

A second class of Vedic worshippers adopted a different order of religious rites, namely, the sacrifice of animals; thus they immolated horses to Indra and the Sun, and Indra is also said to have delighted in roasted buffalo. This difference in sacrifice involved a difference of food, and in all probability a difference of avocation. A peace-loving community might be contented with a milk and vegetable diet; but a military community, to whom physical strength was of the highest importance, would delight in flesh meat, and such they would offer to the gods. It is a significant fact that the allusions to animal sacrifice are by no means frequent in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, whilst they find full expression in the ritualistic works of a later age, in which the Brāhmins are represented as the sacrificers.⁴⁶ From this it may be inferred that so long as the Vedic Aryans were dwelling in the Punjab, the priestly orders still retained their bloodless sacrifices; but as they advanced further and further into the interior, and depended more and more upon their military protectors, so they found it more and more necessary to propitiate the warriors by the worship of their gods and the performance of animal sacrifices. The

Increased prevalence of animal sacrifices when the Aryans became a conquering power.

⁴⁶ See especially the Brahmanam Aitareya. Haug's translation.

military community thus referred to may therefore be identified with the ancestors of the Kshatriyas.

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The third class of worshippers cannot be traced quite so easily, but still glimpses are to be obtained of a mercantile and maritime community, who especially worshipped Varuna, the god of the ocean, and who may be identified with the Vaisyas. Here it may be remarked that no opposition seems ever to have arisen between the Vaisyas and the other two castes, like that which broke out between the Bráhmans and the Kshatriyas. Indeed the wealth of the Vaisyas rendered them at a later period of considerable influence, inasmuch as they employed Bráhmans to perform sacrifices, and took Kshatriyas into their pay as soldiers and guards.

3rd. A mercantile class, the ancestors of the Vaisyas.

The early separation of the Bráhmans from the Kshatriyas, the priest from the soldier, is a question of much historical importance, and will be further discussed hereafter. For the present it may be sufficient to remark that the separation does not appear to have originated so much in those superstitious caste ideas which prevailed at a subsequent period, as in the difference of avocations, sentiments, and aspirations. What the priest was to the feudal Chieftain of the Dark Ages, such was the Bráhman to the Kshatriya. The Bráhman subsisted upon a diet of milk and vegetables, and spent his time in tending his flocks and herds, in composing hymns to the different deities, and in speculative inquiries as to the origin of man and the universe, and their relationship to the Supreme Being. As to the history of the past, apart from religion, he cared nothing, excepting so far as he might succeed in converting ancient traditions into a vehicle for religious teaching. Ac-

Origin of the difference between the Bráhmans and the Kshatriyas.

Characteristics of the Bráhmans.

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Characteristics
of the Kshatri-
yas.

Accordingly in a later age he readily falsified those traditions for the purpose of promulgating Bráhmancial ideas and exalting the pretensions of his own caste; and it was doubtless by this process that the Bráhmans ultimately succeeded in forming themselves into a sacerdotal community, who sought to bring all classes and ranks, Turanians as well as Aryans, under the yoke of ecclesiastical or caste supremacy. The Kshatriyas, on the other hand, were eaters of flesh meat, and delighted in war and the chase, and especially gloried in the exploits of their forefathers. The consequence was that they possessed a rich stock of traditions which appear to have been handed down from generation to generation in the form of ballads. Thus the Kshatriyas appear as a fighting and conquering class, and originally exercised such influence over the masses as to be known as Kings or Rajas, whilst their god Indra was worshipped as the emblem of sovereignty. Ultimately, however, they appear to have degenerated into effeminate priest-ridden sovereigns and mercenary soldiers; and whilst such sovereigns served the Bráhmans out of superstitious fear, the soldiers entered the service of the Vaisyas for the sake of pay.

Extent of the
separation be-
tween the Bráh-
mans and the
Kshatriyas in
the Vedic age.

The question of how far the two classes of Bráhmans and Kshatriyas were really separated from each other in Vedic times does not appear to be indicated in the Rig-Veda; but it may be inferred from the data which will appear hereafter. Originally they probably grew up side by side, and their cause was identical, namely, the subjugation of the country. Indeed it is by no means improbable that the duties of priest and warrior were originally fulfilled by one and the same individual, the father,

the Chieftain, or the Raja. Gradually, however, the Chieftains or Rajas may have found it convenient to engage priests specially for the performance of sacrifices and other rites and ceremonies; and at such a stage, a stage to which the original story of the Mahá Bhárata appears to belong, the haughty Kshatriyas would look down with some disdain upon the mercenary or mendicant priest. But in due course the priests, as already indicated, formed themselves into a class, and exercised a vast and mysterious influence upon the masses; and in later times of peace and luxury, they established a spiritual and caste ascendancy, which overshadowed and overawed the mightiest Raja of the Kshatriyas. Indeed whilst the more ancient Kshatriyas seem to have regarded the Bráhmans with much the same disdain as might have been exhibited by the half-converted warriors of the Dark Ages towards the wandering Friars, no priest or confessor ever possessed a more powerful sway over King or Baron, than was exercised by the later Bráhmans over the Hindú Rajas.

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Rise of Brah-
manical ascend-
ancy.

The original traditions and institutions which appear in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana are undoubtedly of Kshatriya origin, and in their earliest form were probably little more than ballads, which were sung or chaunted by bards and eulogists at the feasts and festivals of the Kshatriyas. Under such circumstances the details may have been exaggerated by the old Kshatriya bards in order to glorify the ancient Rajas, and gratify the Chieftains present by extravagant praises of their ancestors. Occasionally too the bards seem to have introduced poetical embellishments, and artificial turns of a

Traditions and
institutions in
the Mahá Bhá-
rata and Rámá-
yana, chiefly of
Kshatriya ori-
gin.

Exaggerations
and embellish-
ments of the
Kshatriya
bards.

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Later Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhá-rata. Their falsifications and interpolations.

plot, which were more in accordance with a later and luxurious stage of civilization, and also better calculated to awaken and keep alive the interest of large and mixed audiences. But the latest compilers of the Mahá Bhá-rata were unquestionably Bráhmans; and they appear to have resolutely and consistently falsified the Kshatriya traditions, for the purpose of promulgating their own tenets of religion and morality; and especially for asserting their own supremacy as an hereditary sacerdotal caste, invested with supernatural powers, and superior not only to the Rajas but to the very gods of the Kshatriyas. Ancient Bráhman sages, under the name of Rishis, are abruptly and absurdly introduced in order to work miracles of the wildest and most senseless character, and to compel the reverence and obedience of such deities as Indra to Brahmanical authority. Moreover acts which are contrary to morality and common decency, are occasionally introduced for the depraved purpose of representing the more famous Bráhmans as the direct progenitors of the more famous Rajas. Again, Rajas are described as paying a reverence to Bráhmans amounting to worship, and as rewarding them with extravagant profusion, probably as examples for later Rajas to follow. Fortunately however for the purposes of history, these interpolations can generally be detected by the supernatural character of the details, and may therefore be largely eliminated; excepting in those cases where the later fable has been so intertwined with the more authentic narrative, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other without danger of mutilating the original Kshatriya tradition.

Data by which the fact of an interpolation can be established.

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without oppressing the reader with needless repetition and unmeaning dialogue ; and has been interspersed with such explanations and commentary, and such indications of the inferences to be derived from different phases in the traditions, as might serve to render the whole acceptable to the general reader.⁴⁷

Degree of credibility to be attached to the subject matter thus exhibited.

But when the main stories of the "Great War of Bhárata," and the "Adventures of Ráma" have been reproduced from the ancient poems, and cleared of most of the non-essential and non-historical matter, a question arises as to the degree of credibility to be given to the residue. Upon this point it may be remarked that where there is no motive for deception, and no departure from nature, a general belief may be accorded to the incidents ; and even when the incidents themselves are doubtful, there is no occasion for withholding a general belief in the pictures of life and manners which the descriptions convey. It has already been admitted that the ancient bards did occasionally indulge in Oriental exaggeration and embellishment, which a critical age refuses to accept as abstract truth. Deeds of heroism and feats of skill or strength are frequently described in the language of hyperbole ; and so too are the goodness of men and the beauty of women, or the wickedness and deformity of those aboriginal tribes with whom the ancient Hindús were occasionally at war. Garlands of jewels are substituted for garlands of flowers ; thrones of gold and silver for

Exaggerations and embellishments to be treated with leniency.

⁴⁷ Some idea of the enormous bulk of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana may be formed from the estimate that a literal translation of the former would occupy about fifteen volumes octavo, whilst a similar version of the latter poem would fill about six volumes octavo.

Simple character of ancient Hindú historians.

Ballad histories.

Excitement of the audience.

Circumstances under which portions of the Epics are chaunted or read.

seats of a less rare and costly material; gorgeous palaces for rude forts of mud or stone. Again, the humour of incidents is often heightened by the interpolation of telling words in the dialogue; or the interest of the plot is increased by the introduction of new but trivial details. Such additions, however, are both allowable and natural in a primitive age, when the historian is little more than a narrator of stories, and is appreciated, not for his critical powers, or his impartiality, or his rigid adherence to abstract truth, but for the interest he excites and the amusement he conveys. Such history should of course be accepted, not as a sober narrative or unimpassioned disquisition, to be perused in silence and calmness in the study, but rather as a romantic ballad to be chaunted with modulated voice before a large and mixed audience of men and women of all ages, with uncultured minds probably, but with every passion of the human heart in full and healthy play. Under such circumstances the reader or chaunter is rewarded, not by calm approval, but by tears and laughter, and by the excitement which is perceptible in lips and eyes. These conditions of Hindú historical literature will be fully indicated in the progress of the narrative; but if the European reader would really identify himself with a Hindú audience, he must enter the covered court-yard of a wealthy zemindar during a marriage-feast, or approach a shady tree on the evening of some village festival. Then when the gods have been worshipped, and the dancing-girls are weary, he may watch the appearance of a Bráhmaṇ with his sacred palm-leaves, and soon perceive that the ears of young and old are all open to the ancient song.

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Doubtful extent
of the Raj.

of Bhárata, after the name of the great hero Bhárata, who is said to have first established an empire in India. It may be called Aryan, because its traditions have been preserved in the Sanskrit language; and because, as will be perceived hereafter, its institutions resembled those of other branches of the Aryan race; and the Raj itself had probably been wrested from an aboriginal population by the Aryan invaders. The extent of the Raj is doubtful, and the frontiers probably advanced or receded according to the prowess or otherwise of the reigning Raja, either against the aboriginal tribes in the neighbourhood, or against an enemy or rival of the same race. Judging from the homely character of some of the details, the rule of the Raja could scarcely have extended many miles from the city of Hastinápur; but these details are mingled with references to far distant localities, and general allusions to conquest and empire. Such references, however, are probably only the exaggerations of bards and eulogists, intended to gratify the later Rajas; but, if true, they would carry the frontiers of the Raj of Bhárata over all or the greater portion of the Doab, or that fertile territory which lies between the Ganges and the Jumná, and extends from the foot of the Himálayas to the junction of the two rivers. At a later period the exploits of Bhárata and the greatness of his empire were celebrated with even a larger amount of laudation and extravagance. He was a Mahá Raja, or great Raja, or Raja of Rajas; and his Raj included all the kingdoms of the earth. Indeed, so famous became the name of Bhárata, that to this day the whole continent of

Name of Bhárata applied in modern times to all India.

India is known to the Hindús by the name of Bhárata-varsha, or the country of Bhárata. How far these assertions are to be believed will be best gathered from the following history.

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The ancient traditions of the royal house of Bhárata might have been expected to throw some light upon the early history of the Aryan conquest of India. Unfortunately, however, the attention of the Kshatriya bards was directed not so much to the Aryan conquest of the aborigines of the country, as to a desperate fratricidal struggle which took place between two rival branches of the family. Early legends have been preserved of the Rajas who reigned before the breaking out of this great war, but they have been reduced to such a mythical condition by Kshatriya bards and Brahmanical compilers as to be generally worthless for the purposes of history. Thus the Kshatriya bards declared that the Rajas of Bhárata were descended from the Moon, and that one of their number conquered Indra, the ruler of the gods; whilst the Brahmanical compilers, not to be behindhand in the work of supernatural laudation, admit both statements, but add that the Moon itself was begotten by one of their own Rishis or saints, and that the Raja only conquered Indra by the aid of the Bráhmans. The authentic tradition which forms the groundwork of the Mahá Bhárata really commences with Raja Dhritaráshttra, whose sons, known as the Kauravas, engaged in a long and bitter rivalry with their cousins the Pándavas, who were the sons of Raja Pándu; and it was this rivalry between the Kauravas and Pándavas that ultimately

Mythical character of the more ancient traditions of the royal house of Bhárata, which precede the main story of the great war.

Kshatriya myth that the Rajas of Bhárata were descended from the Moon.

Brahmanical myth that the Moon itself was begotten by an ancient Rishi.

Commencement of the main story of the Mahá Bhárata with Raja Dhritaráshttra.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II. led to the great war from which the Mahá Bhárata derives its name.¹

Legends of the
Rajas of Bhárata
from Bhárata to
Dhritaráshtira.

The traditionary history of the royal house of Bhárata, from the great Rája Bhárata himself down to the commencement of the reign of Dhritaráshtira, when this rivalry first began, comprises a few legends which are worthy of notice ; inasmuch as by removing the supernatural matter, which may be regarded as a mythical husk added by the later bards, it is possible to arrive at the authentic tradition which forms the kernel of the legend. The narratives in question are four in number, and may be thus indicated :—

Four legends.

1st, Legend of Raja Bhárata, who played with lions in his childhood, and afterwards founded the great Raj of Bhárata.

2nd, Legend of Raja Sántanu, who married a young wife in his old age.

3rd, Legend of Raja Vichitra-vírya, who died childless, and had sons begotten to him by Vyása, the sage.

4th, Legend of Rajas Pándu and Dhritaráshtira, and their sons the Pándavas and Kauravas.

1st, Legend of
Raja Bhárata.

The legend of Raja Bhárata may now be related, as follows :—

¹ The Mahá Bhárata really opens with a so-called sacrifice of snakes, in which vast numbers of snakes, who are confounded with an ancient race of serpent worshippers known as Nágas, are said to have been forced by certain Brahmanical incantations to enter the fire of a great sacrifice which was being performed by a Raja named Janamejaya, in revenge for the death of his father, who had been bitten by a snake. The origin of this confusion of snakes and Nágas will be explained hereafter. It will be sufficient to say that according to the myth Janamejaya subsequently killed a Bráhman, and that in order to expiate this dreadful crime, he listened to a recitation of the whole of the Mahá Bhárata, which was performed by Vaisampáyana, the pupil of Vyása, the sage. Accordingly the Mahá Bhárata, which is said to have been originally composed by Vyása, is supposed to be written exactly as it was recited by Vaisampáyana.

Once upon a time the valiant Raja Dushyanta was hunting in the forest, when he beheld the beautiful Sakuntalá, the daughter of Kanwa the sage; and he prevailed on the damsel to become his wife by a Gandharva marriage, and gave her his ring as the pledge of his troth. Then Dushyanta returned to his own city, whilst Sakuntalá remained in the hermitage of her father. After this Durvāsas the sage visited the hermitage of Kanwa, but the thoughts of Sakuntalá were fixed upon her husband, and she heard not the approach of the sage. And Durvāsas cursed the damsel, that she should be forgotten by the man she loved; but after a while he relented, and promised that the curse should be removed as soon as Dushyanta saw the ring. And Sakuntalá found that she was with child, and she set off for the palace of her husband; but on her way she bathed in a sacred pool, and the ring dropped from her finger and was lost beneath the waters. When she reached the palace of the Raja, his memory had departed from him, and he would not own her to be his wife; and her mother came and carried her away to the jungle, and there she gave birth to a son, who was named Bhárata. And it so happened that a large fish was caught by a fisherman, and the ring of Dushyanta was found in the belly of the fish, and carried to the Raja; and Dushyanta saw the ring, and he remembered the beautiful Sakuntalá, who had become his wife by a Gandharva marriage. And the Raja went into the jungle and saw the boy Bhárata sporting with young lions, and setting at nought the lioness that gave them suck; and his heart burned towards the lad; and presently he beheld the sorrowing Sakuntalá, and he knew that Sakuntalá was his wife, and that Bhárata was his son. So Raja Dushyanta took Sakuntalá and Bhárata to his own city; and he made Sakuntalá his chief Rání, and appointed Bhárata to succeed him in the Raj.

Now when Bhárata was grown, he became a mighty warrior, and conquered all the regions of Hindustan and called them by his own name; and he was the most renowned of all the Lunar race, who boasted that they were the children of the Moon. And Bhárata begot Hastin, who built the city

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Amour of Dushyanta and Sakuntalá in the jungle.

Bhárata, the son of a Raja by the daughter of a Bráhman.

Curse of Durvāsas the sage.

The lost ring.

The ring found.

Raja Dushyanta sees his son Bhárata playing with lions.

Dushyanta takes Sakuntalá to wife, and acknowledges Bhárata to be his son.

Foundation of the great Raj of Bhárata by Raja Bhárata.

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of Hastinápura;² and Hastin begot Kuru, and Kuru begot Sántanu; and Sántanu was the great-grandfather of the men who fought in the war of Bhárata.

Review of the
foregoing story
of the birth of
Bhárata.

Significance of
the tradition
rendered per-
ceptible by eli-
minating the su-
pernatural inci-
dent of the curse
of Durrvasas.

Historical form
of the tradition.

Gandharva mar-
riage, a union
without mar-
riage cere-
monies.

The foregoing legend of the birth of Raja Bhárata is very prominent in Hindú story, and forms the groundwork of Kálidása's charming drama of "Sakuntalá, or the Lost Ring." Its historical significance, however, can only be apprehended by a consideration of the suspicious incident in the legend, namely, the curse of Durrvasas. This incident is supernatural, and may be eliminated from the legend on two grounds; first, it is incredible that the curse of a Bráhmaṇ should possess the efficacy ascribed to it in the story; and, secondly, if the efficacy of the Bráhmaṇ's curse could be admitted, it is incredible that a holy sage should have inflicted such a curse upon a maiden for so trifling a provocation.³ By excluding the curse, the legend assumes a natural and historical form. A Kshatriya, whilst hunting in the forest, falls in love with the daughter of a Bráhmaṇ, and prevails upon her to accept him as her husband by what is called a Gandharva marriage. This Gandharva marriage is an anomaly. It is simply a union prompted by mutual desire, and

² The bare statement that the city of Hastinápura was founded by Hastin, the son of Bhárata, is not without value. According to local tradition the original seat of the empire of Bhárata was much further to the north-west, namely, at the site now occupied by the ruins of Takh-i-Bahi, in the country of the Yusufzais to the northward of Peshawur. (See Bellew's *Report on the Yusufzais*, p. 136.) It is therefore easy to infer that the Aryans pushed on from the neighbourhood of Peshawur in a south-easterly direction through the Punjab until they reached the banks of the Ganges, where they erected an outpost at Hastinápura.

³ It may be remarked that Durrvasas appears as the most irascible sage in the whole range of Brahmanical tradition. He cursed Indra so that he lost his strength and sovereignty merely because he dropped a flower which had been given him by the sages. The mythical character of Durrvasas is well displayed in the fable of the birth of Karna, which will be related further on.

consummated without any preliminary ceremonies whatever. It was legalized by the Brahmanical legislator, Manu, probably to cover the scandal of the lawless amours in which the Kshatriyas indulged; and is entitled Gandharva, because such unions prevailed largely amongst the Gandharvas, or mountain tribes on the western Himalayas. Manu however declares that none but Kshatriyas may contract such marriages; and he denounces them as base marriages, the offspring of which will not cruelly, speak untruthfully, and abhor the Vedas.¹

But to return to the story. The Kshatriya in question prevailed upon the Bráhmán's daughter to yield to his desires by engaging to marry her, and giving her his ring as a pledge of his truth. He then abandoned the damsel, and returned to his own city. Subsequently the damsel found that she was about to become a mother, and accordingly proceeded to the home of the Kshatriya to demand the fulfilment of his promise. Unfortunately, she had lost the ring, and in the absence of such evidence the Kshatriya conveniently forgot his engagement to marry the daughter of a priest. Ultimately when the ring was found, and he either saw or heard of the exploits of Bhátata in taming lions, he acknowledged the young hero to be his son, and made the mother his chief Ráni. The question of why the Kshatriya was reluctant to acknowledge the daughter of a Bráhmán to be his wife, will be solved hereafter, when it will be seen that in the Vedic period the Bráhmán held an inferior rank to the Kshatriya. The reason for the interpolation of the

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inferior rank of the Kshatriya to the Bráhmán, which is the subject of the present chapter.

Inferiority of the Bráhmán to the Kshatriya in the Vedic Age.

¹ Manu, c. III. v. 26, 32, 41.

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myth respecting the curse of Durvása will then, in like manner, become apparent; it was intended to explain the reluctance of the Kshatriya, without wounding the pride or lowering the assumption of the later Bráhmans.⁵

2nd. Legend of
Raja Sántanu.

The second legend, namely, that of Raja Sántanu, turns upon a more natural event. Sántanu was third in descent from Bhárata. The legend is as follows:—

Desire of old
Raja Sántanu
for a young wife.

Now Raja Sántanu, the great-grandson of Bhárata, reigned in much glory in the city of Hastinápura, and he had many sons by the goddess Gangá,⁶ but only one lived to be a man, and his name was Sántanava. And it came to pass that when Raja Sántanu was very old, he desired to marry a damsel who should be young and beautiful; and Sántanava found such a damsel as his father desired. But the parents of the girl would not give her to the Raja, saying:—“If our daughter bear sons to the Raja, they will neither of them succeed to the Raj; for when Sántanu dies his son Sántanava will become Raja.” Then Sántanava determined to sacrifice himself in order to gratify his father; and he made a vow to the parents of the damsel, saying:—

Vow of his son
Sántanava, who
was henceforth
known as Bhish-
ma, or “the
dreadful.”

“If you will give your daughter in marriage to my father, I will never accept the Raj, or marry a wife, or become the father of children by any woman; so that, if your daughter

⁵ Sakuntalá's own birth is lost in a myth, which was probably intended to exalt her origin. She is represented as being not the real but the adopted daughter of Kanva the sage. Her real father is said to have been Visvámitra, a sage who is celebrated in Brahmanical legend on account of his having been originally a Kshatriya, who subsequently became a Bráhmaṇ as the reward (?) of his austerities. Her mother was a celestial nymph named Menaka. The myth is of no value, and may be dismissed as a pure fabrication.

A tradition has been preserved in Hebrew history which bears a curious resemblance in some points to that of Sakuntalá and the ring, excepting that it is free from mythical matter. See the story of Judah and Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 12—26.

⁶ The idea that Sántanu had children by the goddess Gangá, who is sometimes regarded as the genius or spirit of the river Ganges, and sometimes as the river itself, is one of those senseless myths by which the Bráhmans sought to glorify the ancestry of the later Rajas.

have a son to the Raja, that son shall succeed him in the Raj." And the vow of Sántanava became noised abroad, and ever from that day he went by the name of Bhíshma, or "the dreadful," because of his dreadful vow.* And the parents of the damsel gave her in marriage to Raja Sántanu, and her name was Satyavatí; and she bore two sons to the Raja. After this, Raja Sántanu was bowed down with age, and his soul departed from his body; and he left his two younger sons, and their mother, Satyavatí, under the care of his eldest son, Bhíshma.

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Death of Raja
Sántanu.

The foregoing legend of Raja Sántanu calls for but little remark. That an aged Raja should sigh after the pleasures of matrimony, and desire to marry a young and blooming damsel, is an incident by no means unfrequent; but the idea that a son should sacrifice his right to the succession, and devote himself to a life of celibacy, for the sake of gratifying a doting father, can only be ascribed to that exaggerated idea of filial obedience which appears to be peculiar to the Hindús. Henceforth Bhíshma becomes the patriarch of the family, and is represented as a model of faithfulness and loyalty; and indeed stands forth as one of the leading characters in the Mahá Bhárata.

Review of the
foregoing legend
of Raja Sántanu.

Bhíshma, a lead-
ing character in
the Mahá Bhá-
rata.

The third legend, namely, that of Raja Vichitra-vírya, involves two questions of considerable importance, namely, the real extent of the Raj of Bhárata, and the connection of the sage Vyása with the royal

3rd. Legend of
Raja Vichitra-
vírya.

* An instance of the injury to which a son is exposed in the effort to gratify an aged father, is to be found in the family history of the late Amirs of Scinde. Meer Roostum was the eldest son of Meer Schrah, who was the founder of the Talpura dynasty in Upper Scinde, and died in his eighty-sixth year in 1839. Poor Meer Roostum procured a young wife for his aged father, and the young wife gave birth to the present Ali Moomal, who subsequently deposed Meer Roostum of his Raj, and effected his utter ruin. It was a curious question at the time whether Ali Moomal did not owe a debt of gratitude to Meer Roostum for that intervention without which he could scarcely have been born.

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house at Hastinápur. Before, however, opening up these discussions, the legend may be related as follows:—

Loyalty of
Bhishma to-
wards his two
half-brothers.

When the days of mourning for Raja Sántanu were fully over, the faithful Bhíshma refused to become Raja, and placed the elder of his two half-brothers upon the throne; but the young Raja was haughty and arrogant, and he went to war against the Gandharvas, who dwelt upon the hills, and he was slain by the Raja of the Gandharvas. Then Bhíshma placed the younger brother upon the throne, and ruled the Raj until he should be grown; and the name of the young Rája was Vichitra-vírya.

Accession of
Vichitra-vírya.

Legend of Bhísh-
ma carrying
away the three
daughters of the
Raja of Benares
to be wives to
Vichitra-vírya.

In process of time Bhíshma and the Rání Satyavati began to think of procuring wives for Raja Vichitra-vírya, that he might perpetuate the race of the great Bhárata. And it was told to Bhíshma that the Raja of Kási^a had three daughters, and that the Raja was celebrating a Swayamvara in order that they might choose their own husbands. So Bhíshma thought in his heart that the three damsels might become wives to Vichitra-vírya; and he ordered his chariot, and drove to the city of Kási, that he might see them with his own eyes. And Bhíshma beheld the damsels, and saw that they were very beautiful; but the city was filled with Rajas from all quarters of the world, who desired to wed them. And Bhíshma did not wait for the day of the Swayamvara, nor did he ask the Raja to give his daughters in marriage to Raja Vichitra-vírya; but he seized the three damsels, and placed them in his own chariot, and challenged every Raja present to do him battle. Then the Rajas attacked Bhíshma in great wrath; but he was strong in arm, and skilful in the use of weapons; and he fought and conquered them every one, so that there was not another Raja left to come out against him. Thus did Bhíshma win the daughters of the Raja of Kási, and carry them away in triumph to the city of Hastinápur.

Bhíshma defeats
all the Rajas at
Benares.

The Rání Satya-
vati resolves to
marry the three
damsels to her
son Vichitra-
vírya.

Now when Bhíshma had brought the three damsels into

^a Kási was the ancient name of the city of Benares.

the city, he took them to the palace, and led them into the presence of the Râni, and told her how he had carried them away to be wives to Vichitra-vîrya. And Satyawati was much pleased with the beauty of the damsels, and she bestowed great praises upon Bhîshma, and resolved on marrying them to her son, the Raja. But when the day had come on which the marriage was to be performed, the eldest of the three, whose name was Ambâ, prayed the Râni not to marry her to the Raja, saying:—"My father has already betrothed me to the Raja of Salwa, and I entreat you to send me to Salwa, for I cannot marry a second husband." And the Râni replied:—"Two wives will suffice for my son; therefore let Ambâ go to the house of her husband." So Bhîshma sent Ambâ under a safe-conduct to the Raja of Salwa; and Ambâ told the Raja how she had been carried away by Bhîshma, and had come to fulfil her betrothal. But the Raja of Salwa replied:—"You have entered the dwelling of a strange man, and I will not take a woman to be my wife who has seen the face of a strange man." Then Ambâ wept very bitterly and said:—"O Raja, no man has wronged me, and Bhîshma is the last man who would lay his hand upon a woman, because of his dreadful vow: If, however, you cannot take me to be your wife, I pray you to receive me as your concubine, and suffer me to dwell here under your protection." But the Raja would not listen to her words, but ordered his servants to thrust her out of his city: and she went into the jungle and perished very miserably.

Ambâ, the eldest, declines to be married, as she is already betrothed.

Miserable fate of Ambâ.

daughters-in-law, is there any reference to the rite of Sati, or that of the widow burning herself alive with the body of her deceased husband. Meantime Bhîshma, in faithful adherence to his vow, had placed the sons of Satyawatî in succession upon the throne of Hastinâpur. The first was slain in a war with a neighbouring tribe of Hill men; and the survivor, although only a boy, was acknowledged to be Raja, whilst Bhîshma as guardian managed the affairs of the Raj. At length the young Raja approached the age of manhood, and it became necessary to provide him with a wife or wives; a question which is always considered of the highest importance in Hindû households, where the marriages of sons or daughters are arranged by parents or guardians, without any reference to the inclinations of the parties concerned, who indeed are generally so young as to have no inclinations at all.

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Importance of
marriage in Hin-
dû households.

The tradition of the marriage of Vichitra-vîrya to the daughters of the Raja of Kâsi is, however, very obscure. It would seem from the story that Kâsi could have been at no great distance from Hastinâpur; for Bhîshma drove there in his chariot, and drove back again in the same chariot with three young damsels. But Kâsi is the ancient name of Benares, and Benares is five hundred miles from Hastinâpur as the crow flies. Moreover, in the Vedic age the Aryans could have advanced but a comparatively small way into the north-west quarter of India; and there is reason to believe that Hastinâpur was an Aryan outpost in that direction; for it will be seen hereafter that when a branch of the family migrated southward from Hastinâpur to the neighbourhood of Delhi, they

Suspicious character of the legend, that the wives of Vichitra-vîrya were the daughters of the Raja of Benares.

Distance of Benares from Hastinâpur.

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Region south
and west of Has-
tinápur, a land
of fable in the
Vedic period.

Probability that
either the Budd-
hists or the
Bráhmans inter-
polated this
name.

General credibil-
ity of the tradi-
tion.

Abduction of
women by the
Kshatriyas,
sanctioned by
Brahmanical
law, as Rákshasa
marriages.

found an uncleared jungle. Indeed, the whole region south and west of Hastinápur appears, as far as the descendants of Bhárata are concerned, to be a land of fable, which was peopled by a wild and cannibal race known as Asuras and Rákshasas, who were a pre-Aryan race, and the natural enemies of the Aryans. Accordingly, the legend may be regarded as an instance, of which there are many in the Mahá Bhárata, of the extent to which the later manipulators of the traditions set geography at defiance for the sake of associating later Hindú dynasties with the famous heroes of the house of Bhárata. It is, however, difficult to say whether the Brahmanical compilers invented the story or merely borrowed it from the Buddhists; for though Benares is regarded by the Bráhmans as a holy city, it is still more famous in Buddhist tradition. Either way it is easy to conceive that the name of Kási has been substituted for that of a city very much nearer to Hastinápur; and by adopting this simple hypothesis, not only does the whole story become credible, but actually throws further light upon the condition of the ancient Kshatriyas in India.

The story that Bhíshma carried away the three daughters of a neighbouring Raja to become wives to his young half-brother is, however, in accordance with the rude manners of the Kshatriyas, although the statement that he conquered every Raja in the city borders on the miraculous, and is indeed an interpolation for which it is not difficult to assign a reason. The Kshatriyas were foreign settlers, surrounded on all sides by an aboriginal population; and they had probably brought with them but few women from their native homes beyond the Indus.

Under such circumstances the abduction of women was to be expected, and indeed appears to have been very common. Even the Brahmanical law-makers were compelled to recognize such irregular proceedings, inserting, however, a clause that no one but a Kshatriya should be permitted to commit such an act, and that even a Kshatriya would not be justified unless he had first overcome all the friends and kinsmen of the damsel.¹⁰ Accordingly, such being the law, the Brahmanical compilers were naturally anxious that Bhishma should appear to comply with it, even at the expense of a miracle.

The next point worthy of attention is the story of Ámbá, who pleaded that she could not marry Raja Vichitra-vírya because she had already been betrothed to the Raja of Salwa. In all probability this incident is a later myth, and may have been inserted at the same time that the name of Kási was apparently substituted for that of some city less distant from Hastinápur. It is scarcely compatible with the primitive manners of the patriarchal age, to which the story of the great war evidently belongs; and it is altogether foreign to the idea of a

Mythical character of the legend respecting Ámbá.

¹⁰ The Brahmanical law is thus stated by Manu:—"The seizure of a maiden by force from her house, while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open, is the marriage styled Rákshasa." Manu, III. 53. The name Rákshasa was indiscriminately applied to the aboriginal races, and consequently the origin of the custom thus sanctioned by Manu is to be found in the wars between the Aryans and aborigines. In another place it is said to be allowable only to the Kshaatriyas. Comp. Manu, III. 24, 41. The distinction between a Rákshasa and a Gandharva marriage will be readily perceived. In the former the woman was carried away by force; in the latter the connection was the result of mutual inclination.

The scarcity of women at Hastinápur, and the difficulty of forming suitable alliances, will be noticed hereafter, as this condition of society may have led to the institution of polyandry, and judging from one half-mythical legend seems to have led indirectly to the migration of a colony of Amazons to the Raj of Hastinápur.

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Swayamvara, or privilege of free choice on the part of a daughter of a Raja. Indeed, the father of Anubá could scarcely have undertaken to celebrate her Swayamvara after he had betrothed her to another Raja. The legend, however, is worth preserving, as illustrating those later ideas of chastity and purity which still prevail amongst the Hindús.¹¹

Ancient custom of begetting sons on the widow of a deceased kinsman.

But the most remarkable incident in connection with Raja Vichitra-vírya is the alleged intercourse between Vyása, the Bráhmán sage, and the Raja's widows. The barbarous custom of raising up sons to a deceased kinsman certainly prevailed amongst the ancient Aryans. It is frequently enjoined in Brahmanical law, but is prohibited in the present age, and is especially prohibited to the three twice-born castes of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Súdras.¹² A similar custom was also recognized by the Mosaic law, and indeed is common to many nations in which an undue stress has been laid upon the necessity for the birth of progeny who should perpetuate the family name. But the story that Vyása was the kinsman selected on the present occasion, and that he thus became the direct ancestor of the Kauravas and Pándavas who fought in the great war, is open to the gravest suspicion; and a brief consideration of the traditionary life of the sage, and the quarter of India in which he flourished, will suffice to prove that the story is a mythical interpolation of a later age.

story that Vyása, the sage, became the progenitor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, proved to be a later myth.

¹¹ The country of Salwa has been identified with a part of Rajasthan, or Rajputana, at a considerable distance to the south-west of Hastinápúr. (See Wilson's *note*, Vishnu Purana, p. 177.) The identification of the locality of the present myth can however be of little value.

¹² See Colebrooke's *Hindú law*, Vol. II. p. 466, *et seq.* Traces of the ancient custom may still be found amongst the lower orders of Hindús.

In the first place, it may be remarked that amongst all the Bráhmán sages of antiquity who are famous for their learning, their austerities, and their miracles, few can be compared with the Rishi Vyása. The real history of this Rishi is, however, lost in a jungle of legend. He is said to have been the illegitimate son of a fish-girl, named Matsya, who was employed as a ferry-woman on one of the many small rivers which intersect eastern Bengal, and flow into the Brahmaputra. The native country of Vyása would thus correspond to the modern districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur, on the western bank of the Brahmaputra, and situated about a thousand miles from Hastinápúr. His original name was Krishna-Dwaipáyana, but having become famous as the compiler of the Mahá Bhárata and the Vedas, he is widely known by the name of Vyása, or "the arranger." Other Bráhmans probably assisted in this gigantic undertaking, and went by the name of Vyásas, and these Vyásas are the men who have falsified the Kshatriya traditions for the purpose of promulgating the tenets and exalting the pretensions of their tribe.¹³

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Traditional
history of Vyása,
the "arranger."

Born of a fish-
girl, named Mat-
sya, in Eastern
Bengal.

Identified with
the Vyása, who
compiled the
Mahá Bhárata.

One of the principal objects of these Brahmanical compilers has been to persuade the Hindús that the famous heroes of the Mahá Bhárata were descended from the Bráhmans. It has already been seen that

Efforts of the
Brahmanical
compilers to re-
present the he-
roes of the Mahá
Bhárata as de-
scendants of
Bráhmans.

¹³ In the Vishnu Purána there is a list of twenty-eight Vyásas, ending with the great Muni Krishna-Dwaipáyana, who is popularly regarded as the author of the Mahá Bhárata, although, in fact, he is only the compiler or editor. The list, however, like all lists of names, genealogical or otherwise, which have been preserved in the sacred books of the Hindús, has been so garbled by the Bráhmans as to be useless for the purposes of history. The mythical character of the Puranic list of Vyásas is abundantly proved by the insertion of such names as Bráhma, Manu, Yama, and Indra! It should be added that these names are not merely patronymics which might possibly have been applied to different names, but evidently refer to the gods themselves.

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Brahmanical
myth that Vyása
was the father of
Dhritaráshtra,
Pándu, and Vi-
dura.

The myth
seemed to be an
interpolation by
the super-
natural charac-
ter of its details.

as the Kshatriyas boasted that they had descended from the Moon, the Bráhmans added to the myth by declaring that the Moon itself was begotten by a Bráhman Rishi. In the present instance they state that Matsya, the fish-girl of eastern Bengal, was identical with Satyavatí, the damsel who married Raja Sántanu at Hastinápura; that Satyavatí was the mother of Vyása by an illicit amour prior to her marriage; and that Vyása was the kinsman who was invited to raise up sons to the deceased Raja. The reason for this myth is obvious. Two of the sons who were subsequently born, namely, Dhritaráshtra and Pándu, ultimately became great Rajas, and the fathers of the men who fought in the great war. The supernatural details which the compilers have introduced for the purpose of rendering this myth acceptable to the Hindús, sufficiently betray the whole design. A fish is said to have carried away in its stomach the germ of a boy and girl, of whom a Raja was the father. Subsequently, the fish was caught by a fisherman, who found the boy and girl alive in its stomach, and sent the boy to the Raja, and brought up the girl as his own daughter. The girl grew up and was employed to ferry passengers across a river. She was very handsome, but had a very fishy smell; and a famous Rishi, named Parásara, fell in love with her, and induced her to yield to his desires by promising to remove the fishy smell, and to restore her virginity. The intercourse took place beneath a cloud of thick darkness, which the pious Rishi produced by a miracle in order to escape observation, and immediately afterwards the ferry-girl gave birth to a son, who, in a few moments, became a

full-grown man. This son was Vyása, and he told his mother that he was going off to the jungle to spend his whole life in devotion; but that if ever she required his services, she had only to wish for his presence, upon which he would instantly appear before her. Accordingly, he went away, whilst his mother found that her fishy smell was changed to a delicious perfume, and that she was a virgin as before. Subsequently, she became the wife of Raja Sántanu under the circumstances described; and when Raja Vichitra-vírya died childless, she thought of Vyása, who immediately appeared and did her bidding.

This preposterous myth is not only a manifest falsehood, but its whole tone is so widely different from that of the Kshatriya tradition, that it is difficult to understand how the two could have been possibly amalgamated. In the present place it has been shorn of many details still more extravagant and repulsive, but it may yet serve as a fair specimen of the Brahmanical fables which abound in the Mahá Bhárata. At the same time this fable, like every other which has found its way into the sacred books, is implicitly believed by the Hindús. The ignorance of the masses as regards the actual geography of India has enabled the Brahmanical compilers to ignore the vast tract of land, at least a thousand miles, which intervenes between the native country of Vyása and the city of Hastinápur; whilst the gross superstition of the people has induced them to give the most entire and unquestioning credence to any fable or miracle however monstrous, provided only that it be represented as a religious mystery, or as an article of faith which cannot be doubted without heinous sin. It must, however, be re-

Tenacity of Hindú belief in Brahmanical fables, when represented as religious mysteries, which cannot be doubted without impiety.

Frequent appearances of the mythical Vyás in an abrupt & supernatural manner, throughout the

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that having once foisted Vyása upon the royal house of Bhárata, the sage becomes ever afterwards an important personage in the Epic. He is introduced upon all occasions, and generally in a supernatural manner, for the purpose of giving wearisome advice of a Brahmanical character, or relating some tedious and unmeaning legend. Practically, however, his presence is never necessary to the story, and the Brahmanical interpolations respecting this sage can be generally eliminated from the Kshatriya tradition without any mutilation of the more authentic legend.¹⁴

Kshatriya tradition of the custom of raising up heirs to a deceased Raja, compared with the story of Ruth.

By rejecting the myth that Vyása was the son of the dowager Rání, and accepting the hypothesis that some other kinsman performed the duty of raising up sons to the deceased Raja, the original Kshatriya tradition is at once perceptible, and moreover displays a truthfulness to human nature which throws a new light upon the barbarous custom with which it is connected. In the beautiful story of Ruth this barbarity does not appear, for her husband had been

¹⁴ One circumstance may seem to militate against the hypothesis which refers Vyása to eastern Bengal, namely, that there are apparently two countries entitled Matsya, one being in the neighbourhood of Jeypur in Rajputana. The word Matsya, however, signifies "fish," and not only is eastern Bengal eminently a fish country, but local tradition is very strong in favour of its being the birth-place of Vyása. These conditions are not to be found in the neighbourhood of Jeypur.

It may, however, be remarked that the difficulty of approximating to truth in geographical identification is somewhat appalling. Local tradition will sometimes settle the question, but even that is frequently untrustworthy, for the local traditions of widely distant countries will often refer to one and the same event. Thus it will appear hereafter that in the case of a country named Viráta, local tradition is equally strong in Guzerat and Bengal; and the capital of this perplexing country is still called Matsya. As for the Pundits, I have found men who may be almost said to have the whole of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana by heart, and yet with the exception of a few prominent places they are utterly ignorant of the geography. I once put a few questions of the kind to a very learned Pundit through a third party, and his reply was most significant. "I am sixty-five years of age," he said, "and I was never asked for such information before."

dead a long time, and the poor widow was anxious to find favour in the eyes of Boaz. But for a widow to be compelled to receive a strange man whilst her grief is still fresh, is foreign to the womanly instinct; and this disinclination is exquisitely illustrated in the case of the two widows of the deceased Raja. The aspect of the kinsman is said to have excited their alarm,¹⁵ and thus has given rise to the curious tradition of the birth of the blind Dhritarāshtra, the pale Pāndu, and the slave-born Vidura.

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Significant terror of the widows.

The fourth legend, which refers to Pāndu and Dhritarāshtra, is chiefly of importance as bringing their respective sons upon the stage, who were known as the Pāndavas and Kauravas, and who ultimately engaged in the famous war which forms the leading subject in the Mahā Bhārata. The narrative is as follows:—

4th, Legend of Pāndu, and Dhritarāshtra.

When Dhritarāshtra, the blind, and Pāndu, the pale, and Vidura, the slave-born, were yet boys, they were carefully educated by their uncle Bhīshma; and they were taught the rules of good conduct and polite manners, and practised in the use of arms. And Bhīshma ruled the Raj until they should be grown; but when they were of sufficient age, Dhritarāshtra was set aside because of his blindness, and Vidura because his mother was a slave. So the Raj fell to Pāndu, and he was installed by Bhīshma as Raja of Bhārata.

Education of the three sons raised up to Vichitra-virya.

Pāndu installed Raja of Bhārata.

After this Raja Pāndu married two wives, and their names were Kuntī and Mādri. Now Kuntī was the adopted daughter of Kunti-bhoja, a Raja who dwelt in the Vindhya mountains, but her real father was Sura, the grandfather of Krishna, and she became the wife of Pāndu

Pāndu marries two wives, Kuntī and Mādri.

¹⁵ In the Mahā Bhārata the terror of the women is said to have been excited at the gaunt aspect of the sage, who was wasted away with religious austerities. The details are related at great length and with much simplicity in the poem, but are not suited to the tastes of European readers.

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because she had chosen him at her Swayamvara. But Mádrí was a lady of the Madra country, whom Bhíṣhma had bought with money and jewels from her brother Salya, who was the Raja of Madra.

Reign of Pándu.

This Raja Pándu was a mighty warrior, and he carried on many wars, and conquered many countries, so that in his time the Raj was as great and glorious as it was in the old time of Raja Bhárata.¹⁶ But Raja Pándu was much given to hunting, and when some years had passed away, he went away with his two wives to the Himálaya mountains, and spent his time in hunting deer. And five sons were

Pándu devotes himself to hunting in the Himálayas.

Five sons of Pándu, known as the Pándavas.

born to Pándu, namely, three sons by Kuntí, and two sons by Mádrí, and their names were Yudhishtíra, Bhíma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. And it so happened that one day Pándu shot his arrows at two deer; and the two deer were a Bráhmaṇ sage and his wife, who were accompanying together in that form; and the Bráhmaṇ assumed his proper shape and cursed Pándu that he should die in the embrace of one of his wives. Then Pándu took the vow of a Brahmachari, and gave all his wealth and goods to the Bráhmaṇs, and lived apart from his wives; but one day he sought the company of his wife Mádrí, and he perished in her arms according to the curse of the sage.

Takes the vow of celibacy.

His death.

When Raja Pándu had thus died, his sons built up a funeral pile on which to burn his dead body, and his wives disputed together as to which of them should burn herself alive upon the pile with the dead body of the Raja. And Kuntí said:—"I must burn myself with the Raja, for I was his first wife and his chief Rání." But Mádrí said:—"Not so, for I was his favourite wife, and he died out of love for me." And the Bráhmaṇs who were there listened to all that the two women had to say, and they decided in

Mádrí, younger wife of Pándu, burns herself alive with her dead husband.

¹⁶ Raja Pándu is said to have undertaken a great campaign, which would have extended his empire over all Hindustan, from the Punjab to Bengal, and from the slopes of the Himálayas to the Vindhya mountains. The Dasarnas, or people of the Ten Forts, cannot be identified, though Professor H. H. Wilson thinks that they may be found in the neighbourhood of Chattisgarh in the Central Provinces (see Wilson's *note*, Vishnu Purána, p. 186). Magadhá corresponds to the modern Bahar. Mithila is the modern Tirhút, famous as the birth-place of Sítá, the wife of Ráma.

favour of Mádrí. So Mádrí laid herself upon the pile by the side of her dead husband, and perished in the fire.

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Meantime the blind Dhritaráshtira had reigned over the Raj of Bhárata, and he sent messengers to the Raja of Gándhára, to ask for his daughter Gándhári in marriage.

Reign of the
blind Dhritar-
áshtira.

And the Raja of Gándhára betrothed his daughter to Dhritaráshtira; and when the damsel heard that she was

Marries Gánd-
hári.

betrothed to a blind husband, she tied a handkerchief round her eyes, so that she might be like unto her lord.

Story of Gánd-
hári blindfold-
ing herself.

And Gándhári was conducted to the city of Hastinápura by

her brother Sakuni, and married to Raja Dhritaráshtira, according to the ordinance; and thenceforward she ever

remained blindfold in the presence of her husband Dhritaráshtira. And Gándhári gave birth to a family of sons, who

Sons of Dhritar-
áshtira and
Gándhári,
known as the
Kauravas.

were named Kauravas after their ancestor Kuru, to distinguish them from the Pándavas or sons of Pándu. And the

eldest of her sons was named Kíshodhana, and the chief among his brethren was Duhsástrá.

Now when Mádrí had burnt herself with the dead body of Raja Pándu, Kuntí, the first wife, set out to return to the

Kuntí arrives at
Hastinápura with
the five sons of
Pándu.

city of Hastinápura, accompanied by the five sons of the deceased Raja. And Kuntí and the five Pándavas arrived at

the palace, and told the blind Raja Dhritaráshtira how his brother Pándu had perished in the jungle. And Raja Dhri-

taráshtira wept much at hearing of the death of his brother, and duly performed the funeral rites of bathing and offering

oblations of water to the soul of the deceased Pándu. And

he received his sister-in-law Kuntí and the five Pándavas with much affection, and they took up their abode in his

The Pándavas
dwelt in the
palace with the
Kauravas.

palace along with Gándhári and the Kauravas.

The foregoing legend demands some consideration. Pándu is said to have obtained the Raj, be-

Review of the
foregoing legend
of Pándu and
Dhritaráshtira.

cause his elder brother was blind, and his younger brother was the son of a slave girl, a Súdra. But

it seems difficult to understand why the younger brother should have been taken into consideration.

The white complexion of Pándu was however re-

Pándu, probably
a leper.

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garded as a blemish, and was probably indicative of leprosy. Accordingly it may be inferred that Pāṇdu would have been excluded like Dhṛitarāshtra, had it not so happened that Vidura was begotten upon a slave.

Suspicious details respecting Pāṇdu's marriages. Kuntī, the daughter of the Raja of the Bhojas in the Dekhan.

The marriages of Pāṇdu are also deserving of notice. Kuntī was his first and most celebrated wife, but her origin is involved in some obscurity. She is said to have been the daughter of Kuntī-bhoja, a Chieftain in the Vindhya mountains, and to have chosen Pāṇdu for her husband at her Swayamvara. The statement as regards her birth seems not altogether improbable, ^{made by} the Bhojas, of whom her father was Chieftain, ^{was} a rude race who appear to have preceded the Rajpūtn, and to have occupied the Vindhya mountains in ^{the} Malwa country,¹⁷ and it is just possible that Pāṇdu obtained a wife from such a family. But the statement that Kuntī chose Pāṇdu at her Swayamvara is ^{open to} suspicion, for it seems scarcely possible that she should of her own accord have chosen a man for her husband who was white complexioned, or who, in other words, presented the appearance of a leper. But ^{another} statement is added which is still more questionable. She is said to have been the daughter, not of Kuntī-bhoja, but of a Chieftain named Sura, who belonged to the Yādava tribe; and it is added that Sura and Kuntī-bhoja were friends, and that the latter was childless, and therefore Sura presented him with Kuntī, whilst still an infant, to bring up as his own daughter.

Now Sura was the grandfather of the celebrated

¹⁷ Comp. Wilson's note to Vishnu Purāṇa, pp. 186, 418. The tribe of Bhojas are said to be still represented by the Dhar Rajas. Relics of the tribe may also be found in western Bahar.

Myth that Kuntī was the daughter of Sura, the grandfather of Krishna.

Origin of the myth.

Krishna, and the improbable story of his giving his infant daughter to the Bhoja chieftain seems to be a myth, introduced for the purpose of connecting the family of Krishna with that of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata. The extraordinary history of Krishna both as a warrior and a god will form the subject of consideration hereafter; but it may be generally stated that his worship was adopted by the Bráhmans, and that the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata especially inculcated the worship of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. Accordingly throughout the Mahá Bhárata &c. we have endeavoured to combine as far as possible the historical history of Krishna with that of the heroes who fought in the great war, much in the same manner as they have brought in the mythical history of Vyása. There is however a difference between the two attempts which is highly significant. The traditions of Krishna are to a great extent historical, and true to human nature, but those relating to Vyása are mythical inventions of a supernatural character. The result is that whilst it is easy to eliminate the myths referring to Vyása, it is difficult to separate the traditions of Krishna from those of Bhárata; and thus, whilst it is impossible to avoid the conviction that there is no real connection between the two series, it is better, where absolute proof is not forthcoming, to permit the connection to stand.

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Aim of the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata to promulgate the worship of Krishna, and to connect the traditions of Krishna with those of the Bhárata family.

Contrast between the historical traditions of Krishna and the mythical fables respecting Vyása.

The story of the marriage of Pándu to his second wife Mádrí is perhaps less open to suspicion. Madra is the ancient name for Bhootan, and there seems some reason for believing that Mádrí belonged to one of the mountain tribes occupying the southern slopes of the Himálayas, but probably much further

Mádrí, the sister of a Raja of Madra, on the southern slope of the Himálayas.

contest ensued between his wives as to which of them he loved the best. On such an occasion a number of men and women assembled to hear the dispute, and finally settle the question; and when the best-beloved woman had been chosen, she received the praises of all present, and was then slain over the grave by her next of kin, and buried with her husband, whilst all the others are said to have been sorely grieved at not being thought worthy to follow their husbands.²² The legend of the Satí of Mádrí is precisely of this character. Mádrí disputes the honour with Kuntí, and urges the circumstances of her husband's death as a proof that she was the best-beloved, after which she sacrificed herself upon the funeral pile.²³ How this extraordinary rite became sublimed into a religious duty will be considered hereafter.

Similarity between the Satí of Mádrí and the Thracian custom.

With that the Pandavas were directly begotten by the gods.

As regards the birth of the five sons of Pánu an extraordinary myth has been inserted in the Mahá Bhárata, which has not been incorporated in the foregoing text, but which may be briefly in-

²² Herodotus, V. 5.

²³ The extraordinary self-sacrifice of Mádrí is not without its parallel in modern times. In 1862, a horrible case occurred in Rajputana. A wandering Bhat and beggar died in a village at Jodhpur. His wife, aged twenty-two, was not with him at the time, but arrived at the village one evening six days afterwards, accompanied by her husband's brother. She then learned for the first time that her husband was dead, and at once declared her intention of becoming Satí; but she is said to have been dissuaded by her husband's relations, and to have retired for the night, having apparently abandoned the idea. In the night her brother-in-law heard her moving, and saw that she was collecting wood for a funeral pile. Accordingly he assisted her, and when the pile was finished the poor woman seated herself upon it, whilst her brother-in-law set it on fire. At early dawn the people of the village saw the blaze, and came up to see what was the matter, when they found that the woman had burnt herself to death upon the pile.

The legend, however, respecting the Satí of Mádrí is not altogether without suspicion, inasmuch as it is the only instance recorded in connection with the family of Bhárata. Neither the widow of Sántanu nor the widows of Vichitravírya perished upon the funeral pile.

dedicated here. It is said that Pándu never had any children, and that when he took the vows of celibacy he permitted his two wives to invite the gods to their embraces. Accordingly Kuntí became the mother of Yudhishthira by Dharma, or personified virtue; of Bhíma, by Váyu, the god of wind; and of Arjuna, by Indra, the sovereign of the gods. In like manner, Mádrí became the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva by the two Aswins. This myth furnishes a valuable illustration of the interpolating process which has been carried on by the compilers of the Mahá Bhárata; a process which has hitherto been unimpeached by the Hindús, although replete with senseless contradictions. Thus in the more mythical portions of the Mahá Bhárata, the sage Vyása constantly appears as the grandfather and protector of the Pándavas, whilst the Pándavas occasionally assume to be the sons of the gods specified. At the same time, in the more authentic portions the Pándavas are invariably alluded to as the undoubted sons of Pándu.

Palpable contradictions in the mythical portions of the Mahá Bhárata.

The marriage of Dhritarashtra and Gándhári is significant from a totally different point of view. Gándhári came from the Gándhára country, and the history of the Gandharians is somewhat remarkable. They were a cognate race with the Kshatriyas, and fought in the army of Xerxes (B.C. 480) armed with bows of cane and short spears, and were associated with the Indians.²⁴ Originally they appear to have occupied Cabul on the upper Indus, but about the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era they migrated to the westward, where their

Significance of the marriage of Dhritarashtra and Gándhári.

The Gandharians a famous people, whose name is still preserved in Kandahar.

²⁴ Herodotus, VII. 64, 66.

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Monogamy of
Dhritarāshtra
as opposed to the
polygamy of his
predecessors.

name is still preserved in the modern province of Kandahar.²⁵ Dhritarāshtra, therefore, does not appear to have intermarried, like his successors, with the women of Hindustan; but he seems to have sent for a wife from the country of his ancestors, in the same way that Isaac and Jacob sought for wives in the family of Nahor. The result was that he did not indulge in polygamy; and it will be seen hereafter that Gāndhāri held a position of equality with her husband, which corresponded with the Aryan idea of marriage.²⁶ The sons of Dhritarāshtra and Gāndhāri were called Kauravas after their ancestor Kuru, the son of Hastin; and it is by this term that they are generally distinguished from the Pāndavas, or sons of Pāndu.²⁷

²⁵ See Professor Rawlinson's learned and valuable Essay on the obscure tribes contained within the empire of Xerxes. Rawlinson's edition of Herodotus, Vol. IV. p. 175.

²⁶ Dhritarāshtra is said to have had another son, named Yuyutsu, by a woman of the Vaisya caste; but there is every reason to believe that the existence of Yuyutsu is purely mythical. According to the tradition all the sons of Dhritarāshtra were killed in the great war; and the repugnance felt at the idea that he should die without a son seems to have led to the introduction of Yuyutsu. The point will be further noticed hereafter.

²⁷ Another Brahmanical myth of the usual type has been inserted in this part of the Kshatriya tradition, for the sake of glorifying the miraculous powers of that imaginary and unreal personage, the sage Vyāsa. Gāndhāri is said to have owed the existence of her family to the interposition of this sage. Having on one occasion hospitably entertained Vyāsa, he offered her a boon, upon which she requested that she might become the mother of a hundred sons. Accordingly after two years' gestation, she produced a lump of flesh, which Vyāsa divided into a hundred and one pieces, and placed in as many jars, and the sons were ultimately born from the jars!

CHAPTER II.

EARLY FEUDS AT HASTINÁPUR.

HAVING thus disposed of the group of legends which refer to the ancestors of the Kauravas and Pándavas, it will be necessary to take into consideration those which are connected with the early rivalry which broke out between the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pándu, and which led to the first exile of the Pándavas. This second series of legends, although somewhat interlarded with mythical matter, is of considerable historical value. It throws light upon the so-called education which prevailed in the Vedic age. It illustrates the relations which subsisted between the Aryan settlers and the original inhabitants. It also comprises a curious account of an exhibition of arms, which was evidently the origin of the later tournament. The main incidents of this portion of the narrative may be thus indicated.

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PART II.

Historical value
of the legends
referring to the
early rivalry be-
tween the Kau-
ravas and Pán-
davas.

Main incidents.

1st, Jealousies between the Kauravas and Pándavas, and attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma.

2nd, Education of the Kauravas and Pándavas by Drona.

3rd, Legend of the son of the Bhíl Raja, and his skill in archery.

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4th, Exhibition of arms at Hastinápura.

5th, Legend of the birth of Karna.

6th, War against Drupada, Raja of Panchála.

7th, Rivalry between Yudhishtira and Duryodhana for the post of Yuvaraja.

1st, Jealousies
between the
Kauravas and
Pándavas.

The narrative of the jealousies between the Kauravas and Pándavas, and the attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma, may now be related as follows :—

Attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma.

After this the Kauravas and the Pándavas were brought up together in the old palace at Hastinápura, and they sported together, and were taught together, without any favour being shown to any one more than to the others; but from the days of their early youth the sons of Dhritaráshtira were ever jealous of the sons of Pándu. Now about this time Duryodhana, who was the eldest of the Kauravas, became very jealous of the strength of Bhíma, and he resolved to work evil against Bhíma. And on a certain day Duryodhana put poison into Bhíma's food, and when Bhíma had eaten he was seized with a deep sleep, so that he seemed like one who is dead. Then Duryodhana lifted him up, and carried him to the river Ganges, and threw him into the stream; and Bhíma sank in the deep waters, but he was not drowned, for he descended into the great city of serpents which is underneath the earth. And the serpents recovered him from the poison, and gave him a drink which made him as strong as ten thousand serpents. And Bhíma took leave and returned to the city of Hastinápura, and he had henceforth great strength, and was the mightiest of the mighty.

Bhíma's escape to the city of Serpents.

Bhíma's great strength.

Review of the foregoing legend.

Mythical character of the story of Bhíma's escape from Duryodhana.

The foregoing legend presents a very mythical appearance. In the first place, it may be remarked that the bards of the Mahá Bháráta exhibit from the first a palpable leaning towards the Pándavas, and were quite capable of inventing a myth for the sake of blackening the character of the opposite party.

Secondly, the escape of Bhíma from the bottom of a river to the city of serpents is unquestionably mythical, and belongs to that group of legends which confounded real serpents with a tribe of Scythians named Nágas, and which will be more fully discussed hereafter.

The next incident, namely, the education of the Kauravas and Pándavas, is more valuable, and may be related as follows :—

2nd, Education of the Kauravas and Pándavas by Drona.

Arrival of Drona at Hastinápur.

Drona educates the Princes, on condition that they afterwards fight the Raja of Panchála.

Marriage of Drona.

Practice in the use of the spear, club, bow, and sword.

Taming horses.

Astronomy.

Duryodhana's jealousy of Arjuna.

Some time after this a famous Bráhmaṇ preceptor, named Drona, who had cause of quarrel with the neighbouring Raja of Panchála, arrived at the city of Hastinápur. And Bhíshma rejoiced to see Drona, and made him very welcome, and requested him to instruct the Kauravas and Pándavas in arms and sciences. And Drona said :—" This I will do, but when the young men are fully practised in the use of arms, they must fight for me against the Raja of Panchála." So Bhíshma agreed, and Drona took up his abode in Hastinápur ; and Bhíshma gave Drona his half-sister in marriage. And Drona took great pains in teaching all the young men, but he especially delighted in teaching the Pándavas. To Yudhishthira he imparted the use of the spear, but that young Prince became more renowned for wisdom and goodness than for deeds of arms. To Arjuna he taught the use of the bow, and Arjuna became the most famous archer of his time. To Bhíma he taught the use of the club, for Bhíma was a young man of great appetite and enormous strength, and could wield the club right lustily. To Nakula he taught the whole art of taming and managing horses, and to Sahadeva he taught the use of the sword and a perfect knowledge of astronomy. And Drona instructed the Kauravas in like manner, as well as his own son Aswattháma. But of all his pupils the most beloved was Arjuna, for he was the most perfect of all ; and thus whilst Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was jealous of all the Pándavas, he was the most jealous of Arjuna.

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Review of the
foregoing ac-
count of the edu-
cation of the
Kauravas and
Pándavas.

Wrestling.
Pugilism.
Stone throwing.
Casting the
noose.
Marking cattle
every three
years.

Practicalastron-
omy.

The education of the Kauravas and Pándavas is very briefly indicated in the foregoing legend; but it will appear hereafter that they followed other pursuits of a primitive character, such as might have been expected amongst a fighting community in ancient times. Thus it will be seen that they practised wrestling, fighting with fists, throwing stones, and casting a noose. They also went out every three years into the pastures to mark all the calves which had been born during the interval, and to re-mark all the other cattle. The astronomy that was taught was no doubt of a practical character; and was either to enable the young men to find their way through a jungle in the night-time, or else to assist them in calculating nativities, or really to impart to them some primitive knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies, and the recurrence of months, seasons, and years.

ation of whe-
Drona was
Bráhmaṇ or a
shatriya.

An interesting circumstance is connected with the education of the young men, namely, the selection of a tutor or preceptor, which opens up a curious question as to whether Drona was a Bráhmaṇ or a Kshatriya. In the previous generation the venerable Bhíṣma had undertaken the education of the fathers, but from causes not stated he appears to have taken no part in the tuition of the sons. This duty is said to have been fulfilled by an able and veteran warrior named Drona, who was engaged for the purpose, and who was retained in the household by being married to a damsel of the family named Kripá, who was apparently the daughter of old Raja Sántanu by a slave girl. He appears to have been treated, both by his pupils and the Chieftains of the house, as an experienced and honoured veteran.

Marriage of
Drona to a lady
of the family of
Bhárata.

One slight difficulty occurs in the narrative, which is, however, capable of explanation. Drona had a son named Aswattháma, whom he educated together with the Kauravas and Pándavas. From this statement it must be inferred that Drona married Kripá some years before taking upon himself the office of instructor; for, otherwise, Aswattháma would have been an infant in arms when the Kauravas and Pándavas were almost men.

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Drona's son, Aswattháma, educated with the Kauravas and Pándavas.

It will subsequently be seen that Drona is occasionally represented as a family priest as well as an instructor in the use of arms; that he offered up prayers to the gods on public occasions; and that he was treated by his pupils with a reverence approaching the divine homage which is due to a religious Bráhmaṇ preceptor, rather than with the ordinary respect which would be paid by young men to an elder. This circumstance is deserving of some consideration. It seems certain that Drona was a warrior and a Kshatriya. He occupied the same position as regards the sons of Dhritaráshtra and Pándu which Bhíshma occupied as regards their fathers, and Bhíshma was unquestionably a Kshatriya. On the other hand, the Bráhmaṇs were essentially priests, and are never represented as warriors, excepting in some wildly supernatural legends, which are utterly unworthy of credence. The Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata, however, appear to have resolved on representing Drona as a Brahmanical priest and preceptor, corresponding to the Purohita, or family priest, who occupies so important a position in the modern social system of the Hindús. Accordingly, they have introduced an absurd story respecting his birth, which consists

Efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to represent Drona as a Bráhmaṇ, who officiated as Purohita, or family priest.

wholly of supernatural details of the character already indicated, and which in itself is utterly devoid of interest, excepting on account of the object for which it has been inserted, namely, that of representing Drona as a Bráhmaṇa.¹

Distinction between the two classes of Bráhmaṇas: viz.
(1.) The Purohita, or family priest.
(2.) The Guru, or great ecclesiastical head.

Here it may be convenient to point out the distinction between two classes of Brahmanical

¹ These Brahmanical myths, when closely intertwined with the Kshatriya traditions, and introduced for the sole purpose of concealing the real truth, are a decided difficulty to the historian. He may be able to untwine the one from the other, and even to explain the process by which he has separated the truth from the fable, but he is more or less restrained by the character of the supernatural details, which can rarely be introduced without a shock to modern delicacy. At the same time, the reader can be scarcely expected to accept the judgment of a historian without some proofs of its being based upon a sufficient data; and accordingly the task of separating truth from fable in the present instance must be attempted.

The myth is as follows:—Drona was the son of a famous Bráhmaṇa sage, named Bharadvāja; the germ from which he sprung having escaped from the sage whilst inflamed at the sight of a celestial nymph. Drupada, Raja of Panchála, was born under similar circumstances of a Raja named Prishata, and was educated together with Drona by the sage Bharadvāja. Subsequently, as mentioned in the text, Drona had a feud against Drupada, because when Drupada succeeded his father in the Raj, he did not treat his old fellow-pupil with kindness and respect; but rather taunted him with the inferiority of his position as a mendicant Bráhmaṇa when compared with that of a Kshatriya or Raja. Hence Drona entered the service of Mahárája Dhritaráshtira for the very purpose of obtaining revenge against Drupada.

The truth may probably be as follows:—The association of Drona and Drupada, both as regards the similarity of their births and their being educated together by the same sage, very likely had a natural basis, and in all probability that basis was family relationship. Moreover, it is distinctly stated that in their youth they had agreed to divide the Raj between them; and Drona says plainly that had Drupada adhered to this agreement there would have been no war. This simple hypothesis at once clears away every difficulty. Drupada and Drona were probably brothers. The former succeeds to the Raj of Panchála, whilst Drona goes into exile; and Drona finally marries a lady of the house of Bhárata, and undertakes the education of the Kauravas and Pándavas, on condition that they ultimately undertake an expedition against Drupada. It will be seen, hereafter, that the result of the expedition was that the Raj of Panchála was divided, the half going to Drona whilst the remaining half was left with Drupada.

The Brahmanical compilers also insert another myth, to the effect that Kripá the wife of Drona, was born from a Bráhmaṇa named Gautama, the son of Gotama, in the same unnatural manner as her husband had been. The object of this myth is obvious. Having represented Drona to be a Bráhmaṇa, it was necessary that his wife should be born of a Bráhmaṇa also. It may be added that Kripá had a brother named Kripa.

dignitaries, which, according to Brahmanical ideas, have existed from time immemorial; inasmuch as a clear perception of these two priestly orders will enable the historian to explain with greater clearness the character and scope of some of the most important of the Brahmanical interpolations. The great mass of Bráhmans may be regarded as mendicant priests. They are feasted on occasions of births; marriages, deaths, and other periods of ceremony and festival; and large gifts are distributed amongst them in times of sorrow and trouble, as well as in times of joy. Again, every Bráhman who is acquainted with the different formulas of worship, may become an officiating priest, and receive pay accordingly. But there are two special Brahmanical orders, who form an essential part of the framework of Hindú society, and who for ages have effectually garrisoned and defended the social system against any hostile attack, whether of foreign religions from without or of heresies from within. These two orders are the Purohita, or family priest; and the Guru, or great ecclesiastical head. In relative position they correspond generally to that of Chaplains and Bishops in Christian communities; excepting that the offices, like those of all Hindú institutions, are hereditary; and that sons, real or adopted, have been known to succeed their fathers as Purohitas or Gurus for many generations. Occasionally a Hindú family becomes divided, and the new branch entertains a new Purohita. In like manner also a Bráhman of great wisdom, or austerities, or endowed with a powerful eloquence, or invested by the popular voice with supernatural powers, suddenly appears before the world as a new

Generally correspond to the Chaplains and Bishops of Christian communities, excepting that the offices are hereditary.

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and famous Guru, surrounded by a band of disciples or followers, and ultimately succeeds in founding a new sect, of which he is the spiritual head.

Duties of the Purohita, as a priest of the family, an instructor in the S-utras, a confidential adviser, and an envoy.

The Purohita is essentially a family priest and a religious preceptor. Amongst the poorer classes he may officiate for very many families, in which case he employs assistants, and gives them a stipulated share of the gifts and other perquisites which he may receive. But amongst the richer classes, the duties of a Purohita are confined to a single family, and under such circumstances his influence becomes paramount in the household. He performs all the necessary religious rites and ceremonies for the members of the family, and imparts religious instruction from the sacred books. At the same time, he is the repository of all the family secrets, and the confidential and authoritative counsellor in all times of doubt and difficulty. He is also frequently engaged in more secular matters, such as the settlement of disputes; and in modern times a Hindú Zemindar or Raja has occasionally employed his Purohita as an ambassador or envoy.

The Guru, or great head of the sect.

His ecclesiastical visitations.

The Guru holds a still higher position in the Brahmanical hierarchy. He is the head of the religious sect to which the family may belong; and he is generally engaged in extensive ecclesiastical visitations or tours, accompanied by a band of disciples who occasionally act as assistant Gurus. During his progress he levies such contributions as he may be able to impose upon the families belonging to his sect; he likewise confirms the younger Hindús, who have attained a suitable age, by a number of ceremonies which need not be repeated here. According to the popular belief he is entitled to divine

His spiritual powers.

worship, for he can work miracles and forgive sins. His benedictions can bring down health, wealth, and long life; whilst his curses can burn up armies, remove mountains, change the courses of rivers, or hurl Mahárajás from their thrones. By virtue of these supposed spiritual powers he exercises very large temporal powers. He can excommunicate an offender from his family, as well as from his sect or caste; and he alone can restore the degraded wretch, who otherwise is doomed to a life of utter solitude and despair.

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His temporal
powers.

Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas to whom the Mahá Bhárata refers, there may possibly have been Purohitas, but there certainly were no Gurus. It is not wholly impossible that Drona, whilst instructing the Kauravas and Pándavas in the use of arms, may have acted as a family priest.² But the ancient representatives of the modern Gurus were mythical Rishis, or sages, of whom Vyása is pre-eminently the type; and their presence is not only never necessary to the story, but is invariably foisted on to the Kshatriya tradition by some supernatural details which sufficiently betray the nature and object of

Question of whether the family priest, or Purohita, existed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas.

Question of Gurus amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, disproved by the mythic character of the traditions respecting them.

² The following texts in the Aitareya Bráhmaṇam indicate not only that it was the duty of a Raja to engage a Purohita, but that the ancient Rajas were sometimes disinclined to engage a Purohita.

"Now about the office of a Purohita. The gods do not eat the food offered by a Raja who has no Purohita. Thence the Raja, even when not intending to bring a sacrifice, should appoint a Bráhmaṇ to the office of Purohita.

"This Agni Vaisvanara, who is the Purohita, is possessed of five destructive powers. With them he surrounds the Raja for his defence, just as the sea surrounds the earth. The empire of such a ruler (Arya) will be safe. Neither will he die before the expiration of the full life term (100 years); but live up to his old age, and enjoy the full term apportioned for his life."—Haug's translation, Vol. II. pp. 528, 530.

Dr Haug is of opinion that the institution of a Purohita, as a political functionary as well as a house-priest, may be traced back to the remotest times. See introduction to the Aitareya Bráhmaṇam, p. 67. His opinion is valuable, but his proofs are inconclusive.

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Garbling of the
Mahá Bhárata
by the Purohitas
and Gurus.

the interpolation. Moreover it must always be borne in mind that the later Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata were undoubtedly Gurus, and that the reciters or readers of the Mahá Bhárata are to this day either family priests, or Bráhmans engaged for the purpose. Consequently every opportunity has been afforded to the Bráhmans for carrying out their interested purpose of exalting their own caste in the eyes of the community at large.

3rd, Legend of
the son of the
Bhil Raja.
Illustrative of
the supremacy
exercised by the
Aryan tribes
over their abo-
riginal neigh-
bours.

Ancient and mo-
dern condition
of the Bhils.

But to proceed with the traditionary history of the great war of Bhárata. - During the period that Drona was instructing the Kauravas and Pándavas in the use of arms, an incident occurred which throws an unexpected light upon the supremacy exercised by the Kshatriya settlers in the Raj of Bhárata over the aboriginal populations in their neighbourhood. Amongst all the Hill tribes which appear to represent the more ancient inhabitants of India, and which have preserved their rude habits and manners to the present day, there are none more remarkable than the Bheels or Bhils. These people still occupy the hill tracts of Rajputana and central India, and in ancient times seem to have dwelt in much the same localities; having Rajas or Chieftains of their own, but acknowledging or dreading the supremacy of the Kshatriyas. In the Mahá Bhárata they appear to the south of the Jumná, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Raj of Bhárata; whilst in the Rámáyana they make their appearance further to the east, near the junction of the Jumná and Ganges. To this day the Bhils are cattle-lifters, highway robbers, hunters like Nimrod and Esau, capable of almost any outrage, yet imbued with a sense of truth and honour strangely at contrast with

their external character. At the same time, they are yielding so perceptibly to the personal influence of British administrators, and the advancing tide of British civilization, that within a few generations they will be probably converted into peaceful and industrious men.

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The legend of the son of the Raja of the Bhils may now be related as follows:—

The legend.

When the Kauravas and Pándavas were well practised in the use of arms, so that men could see their strength and skill, the fame of Drona became noised abroad, and many sons of Rajas flocked to the city of Hastinápúr to take lessons from so great a preceptor. And it came to pass that the son of the Raja of the Bhils came to Hastinápúr, and prostrated himself at the feet of Drona, and prayed that he might be taught to shoot with the bow. But Drona refused to teach the Bhíl, saying:—"The Bhíls are a race of highwaymen and cattle-lifters, and it would be a sin to teach them the use of weapons." At these words, the son of the Bhíl Raja returned to his own country, but he was very sorrowful, for he had greatly desired that Drona should teach him the use of the bow.

Flocking of sons of Rajas to Hastinápúr to learn archery from Drona.

Arrival of the son of the Bhíl Raja.

Drona refuses to teach the Bhíl.

Sorrow of the Bhíl.

After this, the son of the Bhíl Raja made a clay image of Drona, and he set it up, and performed worship before it; and he practised the use of the bow in the presence of the clay image. And after many days the young man acquired great skill in archery by virtue of the clay image, and the fame of his shooting was spread abroad on all sides, and great complaint was made to Drona, that by his means the Bhíl had become a mighty archer. So Drona went to the Bhíl country, accompanied by all the young men of the royal house of Hastinápúr; and they beheld the shooting of the Bhíl, and saw that it was very good. And Drona determined to spoil the archery of the Bhíl, and he called to him and commanded him to cut off the forefinger of his right hand. And the Bhíl fell down and worshipped Drona,

The Bhíl sets up a clay image of Drona, and learns archery by practising before the image.

Drona contemplates spoiling the Bhíl's archery, but is restrained by his submission.

the Bhils have lost all memory of the tradition, and shoot their arrows in the usual way.³

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The legend of the public exhibition of arms at Hastinapur, at which the Kuravas and Pándavas displayed their skill before all the Chieftains and ladies of the royal house, is exceedingly curious and interesting; inasmuch as it was evidently an institution of the Kshatriyas, resembling in a remarkable degree the tournaments of the age of chivalry. Sometimes these public exercises took place, as on the present occasion, to enable the younger Chieftains to display their prowess before all the people of the Raj. At others however it was undertaken at a Swayamvara, for in certain cases the daughter of a Raja was not called upon to indicate the husband of her choice, but became the passive prize of that Kshatriya who distanced all his compeers in the performance of some difficult exploit. Under these latter circumstances the Swayamvara seems to have borne so strong a resemblance to the tournament, that it might almost be regarded as the origin of the institution. Subsequently, at a later period in the history of Hindú civilization, the feats of arms were no longer performed by Chieftains of high rank, in the hope of winning a Princess as a bride; but the exhibition degenerated into a mere prize ring, where professional boxers and wrestlers fought each other, or fought with bears and tigers, for the pleasure of the

4th, Public exhibition of arms at Hastinapur.

Resemblance to a tournament.

Three varieties of public exhibition of arms, viz.

(1.) The exhibition proper.
(2.) The Swayamvara.

(3.) Professional pugilism and wrestling.

³ For this information I am indebted to Colonel R. J. Meade, the agent to the Governor-General in Central India, and to Lieutenant T. Cadell, the Bhil agent. Lieutenant Cadell kindly attempted to verify the tradition by directing a number of Bhils, who were in his camp, to practise at a butt; but they all drew the bow with the fore and middle fingers, the arrow being held between the two, and declared that they did so after the manner of their ancestors. They knew no tradition of the custom mentioned, but the Karkoos, or writers, who were present, had heard or read of it.

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Raja and his ladies. Instances of all these different forms of exhibitions of arms are to be found in the Mahá Bhárata, and will in due course be brought under consideration.

The narrative.

The narrative of the exhibition of arms at Hastinápur may now be related as follows:—

Mahárája Dhritarishtra directs Drona to make preparations for a public exhibition of arms.

After a while the Kauravas and Pándavas became fully practised in the use of arms; and Drona told the Mahárája, saying:—"Your own sons, and the sons of your brother Pándu, are well skilled in the use of weapons, and able to fight against other men on the field of battle." Then the Mahárája replied:—"Let a place be prepared in the great plain without the city, that the young men may engage in mock-fighting, and display their skill before all the Chiefs and people of the Raj." So Drona ordered every preparation, and a large space was set apart in the great plain, and fenced round about with barriers. And on one side of the ground galleries were built for the Mahárája and his Chieftains; and on the other side galleries were set up in like manner for the ladies of the royal house of Hastinápur.

Space set apart in the great plain:

The galleries.

Morning of the exhibition.

Galleries adorned with flags and garlands.

The multitude.

The blind Mahárája.

The Chieftains and ladies.

Now when every preparation had been made, the Mahárája appointed a day for the exhibition of arms. And when the morning of the day had begun to dawn, the galleries on either side, and the trees that were round about, were adorned with flags of various colours, and long garlands of sweetly-smelling flowers. After a while all the people of Hastinápur, and great multitudes from all parts of the Raj, gathered together round the barriers and between the galleries, to behold the exercises of the sons of Dhritarishtra and the sons of Pándu. Presently the blind Mahárája was led in and took his seat upon his throne; and Bhíshma, who managed the affairs of the Raj, sat upon his right hand; and on his left sat Vidura, who was appointed to describe to the blind Mahárája all that took place in the plain below. And all the Chieftains of the royal house, and all the ladies of

* Dhritarishtra is always alluded to throughout the Mahá Bhárata as the Mahárája, or "Great Raja," or Raja of Rajas.

Mastinapur, were arrayed in many-coloured cloths, and garlands of flowers, and bright jewels, and took their seats in like manner upon the galleries; and chief amongst the ladies were Gāndhārī, the mother of the Kauravas, and Kuntī, the mother of the Pāndavas.

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When all was ready Drona, the preceptor, and his son Aswatthāma, entered the arēa in pure white garments, and offered up prayers to the praise and glory of the gods. Then the young Princes in like manner entered the arēa arrayed in garments of different colours, and lightly girded for exertion. Each young man carried his bow and arrows in his hand, and respectfully saluted the feet of his preceptor, and awaited his commands. Each one then in turn exhibited his skill by shooting arrows at a butt, first on foot, and then mounted in succession upon a horse, an elephant, and a chariot. Next followed mock fights with the sword and buckler. Then the whole body of pupils, first on foot, and afterwards mounted as before on horses, elephants, and chariots, exhibited their skill in archery, whilst running, galloping, or driving round the arēa at full speed. After this the young men fought with clubs, and the fighting was terrible to behold; and then it was manifest to all men that there was ill blood between the Kauravas and Pāndavas. At one end of the arēa Duryodhana engaged with Bhīma, and after exchanging some heavy blows, the mock combat became a downright battle. The young men rushed upon each other like wild elephants, and laid about them right manfully; whilst the multitude without caught the spirit of the fray, and ran to and fro, shouting some for Duryodhana and others for Bhīma, until the air was filled with noise and dust, and the whole plain was in great commotion. Drona sent his son Aswatthāma to put an end to the combat, but no one heeded him; and Drona at last went himself with all haste, and parted the combatants by main force, and thus put a stop to the turmoil.

Drona and his son Aswatthāma invoke the gods.

The Kauravas and Pāndavas enter the arēa.

Salute Drona.

Feats of arms. Archery on foot, horseback, elephants, and chariots.

Sword-fighting.

Club-fighting.

Combat between Duryodhana and Bhīma.

Interference of Drona.

When the uproar was somewhat over, Drona called upon his favourite pupil Arjuna to exhibit his accomplishments

Handsome appearance of Arjuna.

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Marvellous feats
of Arjuna in
archery, sword-
playing, whirl-
ling the chakra,
and throwing
the noose.

before the assembly. The young Chieftain was as handsome as one of the bright gods; and when he entered the arena, clad in golden mail, and carrying in his hand a bow inlaid with various colours, the multitude hailed him as another Indra, and the heart of his mother Kuntí was filled with pride and exultation. Arjuna then performed very many excellent feats of arms, which surpassed any which had ever before been seen. He set up an iron figure of a boar upon a pillar of wood, and shot five arrows into its mouth at one bending of the bow. Next he tied a cow's horn on a pole, and in one discharge shot twenty-one arrows into the hollow of the horn. Then he mounted his chariot and was driven swiftly along, whilst he shot his arrows right and left with such rapidity and dexterity as bewildered all the beholders. His sword-playing was equally excellent, and he flourished the blade so fiercely that men thought they saw the lightning on the earth and heard the thunder in the sky. Then he took his quoit-shaped chakra, and whirled it at different objects without missing one. Lastly, he armed himself with the noose, and threw it about with such skill, that horse or deer, or any other animal at which he cast it, was invariably brought down. At length he finished his exercises, and respectfully saluted the feet of his preceptor, upon which Drona affectionately embraced him amidst the applause of the whole assembly.⁶

Sudden appearance of Karṇa, the son of a charioteer.

At this time, whilst the Pándavas were exulting in the triumph of Arjuna, and Duryodhana was bursting with jealous rage, another young warrior suddenly entered the

⁶ The description of this exhibition of arms, as it appears in the Mahá Bhá-rata, is filled with Brahmanical exaggerations, which are pleasing to the present taste of the Hindús, but which are excluded from the above text, as they would be tedious to the last degree to European readers. They include the use of weapons which combine contradictory powers, such as arrows having a broad blade at the point which will cut a man's head off; or weapons of a supernatural character, such as arrows producing fire, water, venom, diseases, tempests, and other extraordinary phenomena. It will, however, be seen hereafter that the weapons described by the Brahmanical compilers of the Rámáyana are, if possible, still more extravagant. The Bráhmans in the present day point to the fire-producing arrows as proofs that the ancient Hindús were possessed of fire-arms.

area, striking his arms together with a great noise, after the manner of the ancient wrestlers. This was Karna, the son of a charioteer from the country of Anga, who was very skilful in the use of arms. Karna then said:—"O Arjuna, you have exhibited all your feats of arms; come and look on whilst I perform each one better than you." At these words Duryodhana was in an ecstasy of joy, whilst Arjuna was much displeased, and held his peace. Karna then, to the delight of the Kauravas, and the disquietude of the Pándavas, executed every feat which had been performed by Arjuna; and Duryodhana came forward and embraced Karna, and praised his prowess, and called him "brother."

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Exultation of
Duryodhana
and mortifica-
tion of Arjuna.

At this honour, Karna was greatly pleased, and said before them all that it was his desire to fight Arjuna. Then

Karna chal-
lenges Arjuna to
single combat.

Arjuna was in a great rage, and cried out:—"You desire

Mutual abuse.

to place yourself on an equality with me, but I will so handle you, that you shall learn what it is for men like you to come here without being invited, and to speak before they are spoken to." Karna replied:—"O Arjuna, waste not your words, for when it comes to open fight between you and me, you shall see who will be roughly handled: and as you taunt me with having come without invitation, let me tell you that this plain is none of your property that I may not enter it without your invitation: All other questions be-

tween us must be settled by the sword and bow, and I will so handle you in the presence of your mother here, that all present shall be astonished." These words filled Drona with wrath, and he cried out:—"Why do you listen to Karna with patience? You have my leave: Go, and fight him at once!" So Arjuna and his brothers stepped into the field to face Karna, and Duryodhana and his brothers came forward to back Karna; when a kinsman of the royal house, named Kripa, who was the brother of the wife of Drona, interposed to prevent a battle between the son of a Raja and the son of a charioteer. Kripa said to Karna:—"O young man, are you come hither to measure weapons with Arjuna? Know you that he is the son of Raja Bhishma and the Rání Kuntí, and you must now behave like a man."

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Karna created a
Raja by Duryo-
dhana.

Appearance of
Karna's aged
father.

Karna's filial
reverence.

Bhíma's con-
temptuous lan-
guage towards
Karna.

Combat pre-
vented by the
approach of
light.

Review of the
foregoing tradi-
tion of the exhi-
bition of arms.

Question re-
specting the
birth of Karna.

of your father and mother, that we may know whether you are worthy of being matched with Arjuna." At these words Karna was abashed, and hung down his head like a drooping lily; for he knew that his father was only a charioteer. But Duryodhana, who desired to set up Karna against Arjuna, replied thus to Kripa:—"Greatness depends not upon birth but upon strength, and I hereby appoint Karna to be Raja of the country of Anga." So saying Duryodhana took Karna by the hand, and led him to a golden seat, and ordered the umbrella of royalty to be held over his head. At this moment the father of Karna appeared, trembling with age, but rejoicing in the honours bestowed upon his son; and when Karna saw him he throw down his bow and arrow and advanced to meet the old man, and kissed his feet. Then the Pándavas looked upon the two with smiles of contempt, and Bhíma said to Karna:—"Is it with such a father as this that you presume to match yourself with Arjuna: You, the son of a charioteer, what have you to do with a bow and arrows? You had better far take a whip and drive a bullock-cart after your father." Karna was enraged at their taunts, but made no reply; and the darkness came on very rapidly. And Duryodhana led Karna away to his own palace, and the multitude dispersed to their several homes.

The picture presented in the foregoing tradition calls for little or no remark. The description of the mock combats, and the ill feeling displayed by Duryodhana and Bhíma, are perfectly true to human nature, and there is no doubt that the story is so far authentic. But the abrupt appearance of Karna on this occasion, and his sudden elevation to the dignity of Raja, are points of considerable interest, and seem to invite a close investigation. That Karna was of low birth may be accepted as a fact; but the implication that he was of low birth by reason of his being the son of a charioteer seems

open to question. The driving of chariots was a favourite and royal amusement with the ancient Kshatriyas, as it was with the ancient Greeks. It will be seen hereafter in the authentic tradition of Nala and Damayantí that the deserted Rání recognized her husband by his furious driving; whilst amongst the virtues of Mahárája Dasaratha, as described in the Rámáyana, he is said to have been a perfect charioteer. Again, the charioteer of the sovereign is frequently represented as his confidential friend and chief adviser. Thus it will be seen that Sanjaya was the friend and charioteer of Mahárája Dhritaráshtra, and that Sumantra was chief counsellor and charioteer of Mahárája Dasaratha. But the "arrangers" of the Mahá Bhárata were evidently anxious to throw contempt upon charioteers; and in addition to the reflection upon Karna's birth, there is a curious story in the narrative of the great war, of the rage of Raja Salya on being asked to drive Karna's chariot. The reason for this antagonism appears to be as follows:—The charioteer anciently occupied the same confidential position in relation towards a Raja as was subsequently filled by the Purohita, or family priest. Thus, just before the breaking out of the great war, Raja Drupada sent his Purohita as envoy to Hastinápur; whilst Dhritaráshtra sent his charioteer as envoy to the Pándavas. The inference, therefore, follows that the Bráhmans were jealous of the influence exercised by the charioteers; and the substitution of a Purohita for a charioteer probably marks the period in Hindú history when the military domination of the Kshatriyas was brought under the ecclesiastical and caste supremacy of the Bráhmans.

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Driving chariots a royal amusement.

High rank of charioteers in ancient times.

Reasons why the Brahmanical compilers threw contempt upon the charioteers.

Confidential position of the charioteer, subsequently held by the Purohita, or family priest.

Historical significance of the change.

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Karna's father
not a charioteer
but a carter.

Question of Kar-
na being created
a Raja; mythi-
cal character of
the legend.

As regards Karna, it seems not unlikely that his father was not a charioteer in the higher sense of the word, but a mere carter or waggoner. The language of Bhíma in taunting Karna seems to bear out this view. "You had better," he said, "take a whip and drive a bullock-cart after your father."

The sudden elevation of Karna to the dignity of Raja appears to be open to question. The golden seat to which he is said to have been conducted is evidently mythical. The name of the territory over which he is appointed to be Raja is equally doubtful. Anga is a country which lies far away to the eastward, in the neighbourhood of the modern town of Bhagalpur; and consequently would be separated by an interval of many hundreds of miles from the Raj of Bhárata. But still the dignity may have been conferred, like that of a modern knight-hood, without reference to territory. The right of Duryodhana to create a Raja seems, however, very dubious; and the subsequent language of Bhíma to Karna appears to imply that there was no real recognition of the new rank which had been thus bestowed upon him.

5th. Legend of
the birth of
Karna.

The legend of the birth of Karna is nothing more than a wild myth which has been concocted for the obvious purpose of ennobling Karna by connecting him with the royal house at Hastinápur. The myth is as extravagant and improbable as that of the birth of Vyása, and bears the same marks of a Brahmanical origin; but it may be related here, as reference is frequently made to it in the more modern portions of the Mahá Bhárata. The story is as follows:—

Now Kuntí, the wife of Raja Pándu, was brought up in

Early life of
Kunti in the
house of the
Raja of the
Bhojas.

the house of Kunti-bhoja, the Raja of the Bhojas, and she ever thought him to be her father; but her real father was Surá, the grandfather of Krishna.

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And it happened on a certain day that a sage named Durvása came to the house of Kunti-bhoja; and he was tall in stature, and his hair was matted after the manner of a devotee, and his limbs were of the colour of honey. And Durvása said to Kunti-bhoja:—"O Raja, I am desirous of dwelling with you, but if I do so your people must conform to all my wishes; and they must let me eat when I please, and sleep when I please, and no one must contradict me." And the Raja replied:—"My daughter Kuntí shall wait upon you always, and I am sure that she will serve you to your heart's content." Then the Raja called to his daughter and said:—"O Kuntí, this Bráhmaṇ is about to dwell in my house, and you must serve him night and day; for he is a man of great mortification, and has subdued all his senses by the strictness of his austerities." And Kuntí had great reverence for Bráhmaṇs, and she gladly promised to serve Durvása, the sage, according to the will of her father.

Visit of Dur-
vása, the sage.

Kuntí appoint-
ed to wait day
and night upon
Durvása.

Then the Raja lodged the Bráhmaṇ in the sacrificial chamber, where he had been used to kindle the sacred fire; and Kuntí served the Bráhmaṇ day and night with all diligence and purity. And Durvása was greatly pleased with the service of the damsel; for sometimes he would go out in the morning, and not return till evening or midnight; but Kuntí was always ready with various sorts of victuals to set before him; and if he lost his temper or used harsh words, she took no notice, but continued to serve him as diligently as before.

Kuntí's dutiful
service to the
Bráhmaṇ.

When a year had passed away, Durvása said to Kuntí:—"O well-accomplished damsel, I am entirely satisfied with your service; so now ask a boon of me, and let it be such as will render you blessed beyond all other women." But Kuntí replied:—"O greatest of Bráhmaṇs, if you and my father are contented with me, it is as if you had bestowed all blessings upon me." So the Bráhmaṇ taught her a mantra, and said:—"Whenever you repeat this mantra, any

Durvása offers
a boon to Kuntí.

Teaches a man-
tra to Kuntí.

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god you desire will descend from heaven, and you will bear to him a son, who shall be like unto his father." So Kuntí made no answer, and learned the mantra; for she feared lest she should offend the Bráhmaṇ, and he should pronounce a curse against herself and her father. And Durvāsas praised her greatly to the Rāja, and then left the house and went his way.

Kuntí repeats
the mantra, and
is visited by the
Sun god.

One day after this Kuntí beheld the bright Sun in the sky, and her soul was enlightened, and she saw the Sun in the likeness of a warrior arrayed in golden mail with earrings in his ears. And she repeated the words of the mantra that Durvāsas had taught her; and the god left himself in the form of a Sun to illuminate the world, and descended to the earth in the form of a Rāja, with a crown upon his head and bracelets upon his arms. But when Kuntí saw him she implored his forgiveness and besought him to return; but he said:—"I cannot do this, for all the gods are laughing at my discomfiture." And the eyes of Kuntí were opened, and she saw that Indra and the gods were laughing, and she was much ashamed. So the Sun stayed with her some time, and then went his way.

Birth of Karna.

The babe floated
in a chest upon
the river to the
country of Anga.

After this Kuntí gave birth to a son with golden earrings in his ears, and a golden cuirass upon his body; and no one knew it, and she became a virgin as before. And she took the infant and placed it in a chest, and with many tears and prayers she floated it upon the river; and the river carried the chest into the waters of the Jumná, and the Jumná carried it to the Ganges, and the Ganges to the country of Anga. And the wife of a charioteer saw the chest and carried it to her home; and her husband opened it and found the babe therein, and he and his wife brought it up as their own child; and this boy was Karna.

Review of the
foregoing myth.
Its incredibility.

The foregoing myth is perhaps beneath criticism, but still the pretensions of Durvāsas are very significant, and the reference to the country of Anga is worthy of consideration. The enormous distance which the chest would have had to travel down the

Juninā and Ganges to the country of Anga is alone sufficient to render the myth of the birth of Karna altogether incredible, even if his divine paternity could be explained away; but the object of the myth is not devoid of interest, and can easily be explained. Local tradition in the country which formerly went by the name of Anga, has preserved the name of Karna. A dynasty of Buddhist Rajas appear to have reigned at Anga about the second century of the Christian era under the name of Karnas;⁶ and it is by no means unlikely that the Brahmanical compilers sought to gratify the tastes of the people of the country by establishing a mythical connection between the Karna who fought in the great war, with the Karna Rajas of Anga, who flourished at a much later period. But the vast geographical interval between Hastināpur and Anga has already excited a suspicion that the connection is a fabrication; and this suspicion is confirmed by the supernatural details which the compilers have introduced to carry out their design.

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Object of the
myth.

Association of
Karna with the
later Rajas of
Anga.

The next legend, namely, that of the war against Drupada, Raja of Panchāla, may now be related as follows :—

Now when the Kauravas and Pāndavas had proved before the Mahārāja and all his Chieftains, that they were capable of bearing arms, they were called upon by Drona to fulfil the terms upon which he had educated them, namely, to chastise Drupada, Raja of Panchāla. Accordingly, Duryodhana and all his brethren marched out by themselves against Raja Drupada, but were defeated by the enemy, and compelled to return to Hastināpur. Then Yudhishtira and his brethren marched out against Drupada, and they van-

6th. War against
Drupada, Raja
of Panchāla.

Defeat of the
Kauravas, and
victory of the
Pāndavas.

⁶ This tradition will be found in Dr. Buchanan's account of the Bahar district, preserved in Martin's *Eastern India*, Vol. I.

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Division of the
Raj of Panchála.

quished him and all his forces; and brought him away prisoner. So Drona took the half of Drupada's Raj, but left the remainder in the possession of Drupada. Then Raja Drupada returned to his own country; but he swore that the day should come when he would be revenged upon Drona.

Significance of
the legend of the
division of the
Raj of Panchála.

The story of this expedition against Drupada is somewhat isolated in the Mahá Bhárata, but still appears to have an important bearing upon the main incident in the Epic. The defeat of the Kauravas and victory of the Pándavas may be somewhat mythical; and, indeed, chiefly serve to illustrate the tendency of the original bards to celebrate the praises of the Pándavas at the expense of the Kauravas. But the division of the Raj of Drupada seems to imply that Drona had some claim to the half share, and confirms the suspicion already expressed that Drona was a brother or near kinsman of Drupada, and that the Brahmanical compilers have suppressed the relationship in order to represent Drona as a Bráhmaṇ.

Geographical
position of the
Raj of Panchála.

The geographical position of the Raj of Panchála opens up a curious question of inquiry. The name has been sometimes applied to the Punjab, and the Raj certainly appears to have been situated in close contiguity with that of Hastinápur. But Manu identifies Panchála with Kanouj, which is at least two hundred miles from Hastinápur; whilst the compilers of the Mahá Bhárata indulge in far grander ideas, and seem to indicate that the Raj of Bhárata extended over the northern Doab, whilst the Raj of Panchála occupied the more southerly portion as far as the junction of the Ganges and Jumná. It will be seen hereafter that the Raj of

Pañchála was probably a little territory in the more immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápura.

The story of the rivalry between Yudhishtira and Duryodhana for the post of Yuvaraja, or heir-apparent, may now be related as follows:—

When the war against Drupada was fully over, there was more ill blood between the Kauravas and the Pándavas than had ever been before, because the Kauravas had been defeated by Drupada, and the Pándavas had gained the victory. Meantime the Mahárajá decided that Yudhishtira, the eldest son of Pándu, had the best right to succeed him in the Raj; and as the custom was, Yudhishtira was installed as Yuvaraja, or “Little Raja.” Then Yudhishtira began to rule the Raj for his uncle the Mahárajá, and the glory of his reign became greater than the glory of his father Pándu; for though he was not skilful in the use of arms like Bhíma or Arjuna, his wisdom and virtue were famous throughout the land, and his truthfulness, and justice, and patience on all occasions rendered him beloved by all people.

7th. Rivalry between Yudhishtira and Duryodhana, for the post of Yuvaraja.

Yudhishtira appointed Yuvaraja, or heir-apparent.

Now when Yudhishtira was appointed Yuvaraja, his cousin Duryodhana was in great affliction, and Duryodhana plotted day and night with his brother Duhśāsana, and his uncle Sakuni, and his friend Karna, how to bring about the destruction of the Pándavas. One day when the Mahárajá was quite alone, Duryodhana went into his presence, and spoke to him as follows:—“O my father, why have you shown such small regard for your own sons, and treated them so unworthily? You were the elder brother of Raja Pándu, and ought to have succeeded to the Raj, but you gave up the whole to your younger brother; and now you have passed by your own sons, and have intrusted the management of all affairs to the sons of Pándu: The Raj is yours by right, and the inheritance should descend to us who are your sons; why, then, do you give the preference to others, and make us small and contemptible in the eyes of all people?” Dhritaráshtira replied:—“O my son, my

Jealousy of Duryodhana.

Conversation between Duryodhana and the Mahárajá.

Remonstrates at the Kauravas being passed over in favour of the Pándavas.

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brother Pándu was without an equal in all the world; and how with my blindness could I pretend to govern the Raj! His sons after him are endued with every qualification for the management of affairs, and give every satisfaction to all the people; how then can I banish them from my councils? Moreover, Yudhishtira possesses the most praiseworthy qualities, such as you do not yourself possess; how then can I be at enmity with him, and exclude him from the government?" Duryodhana said:—"I know of no such qualifications as render Yudhishtira superior to me, but I do know that in the field I am more than a match for half a score of Yudhishtiras: So if you are resolved to exclude me from all share in the management of the Raj, I will certainly kill myself, and thus get rid of all my vexations." Dhritarashtra replied:—"O my son, why do you give way to such violent impatience? If you are bent upon exercising power I will divide the management, and give the half to you and other half to Yudhishtira; so that henceforth there shall be no strife betwixt him and you."

The Mahárajá offers to divide the administration between Duryodhana and Yudhishtira.

Duryodhana stipulates for a division of the land, but is refused by the Mahárajá.

When the Mahárajá had thus spoken, Duryodhana said:—"I accept your proposition, O my father; but let the country be divided, so that the Pándavas can take their own land and rule there, whilst I and my brethren stay here at Hastinápura, and govern under you; for if both we and they dwell in the same place there may be feud between us, and many of our friends may be slain." The Mahárajá replied:—"The great head of our family is Bhíshma, and he will never be satisfied if the Pándavas are sent away to a distance from this city; neither will Drona or Vidura rest content; how then can I tell them to go?" Duryodhana said:—"O Mahárajá, it is beneath your dignity to consult others: Do you summon the Pándavas, and command them to go to the city of Váránávata, and dwell there for some time; and they will obey your commands without delay, and after they are gone, nobody will trouble about the matter." Accordingly the Mahárajá did as Duryodhana counselled. He sent for Yudhishtira and said to

The Mahárajá sends the Pándavas to dwell for a while in the city of Váránávata.

him :—" O my son, there is a renowned city, rich in gold and jewels, named Váranávata : Go thither, you and your brethren, and dwell there for some time ; and after that I will recall you." So Yudhishtira and his brethren took leave of the Mahárajá, and of all their kinsmen, and departed with their mother Kuntí to the city of Váranávata.

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CHAPTER III.

FIRST EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

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Authentic tradition of the first exile of the Pándavas lost in a later fiction.

Mythical character of all legends referring to localities at a distance from Hastinápur.

Váranávata, the modern Alláhabád, 500 miles to the south-east of Hastinápur.

Legend of the first exile of the Pándavas, some thousand years later than the original tradition.

WITH the journey of the Pándavas to the city of Váranávata the narrative undergoes an entire change, and for a brief period the authentic tradition is utterly lost in a later fiction. Here it may be remarked that so long as the scene is laid in the city of Hastinápur, or its immediate neighbourhood, so long the story seems to approximate to historic truth; but when the locality is removed to a distance of hundreds of miles from Hastinápur, the narrative is immediately reduced to the condition of either a religious myth or a palpable fiction. Such is the case as regards the alleged journey of the Pándavas to the city of Váranávata, the modern Alláhabád, the sacred city at the junction of the Ganges and Jumná, and one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in Hindústan. A geographical interval of five hundred miles separates the city of Hastinápur from the city of Alláhabád; and, in all probability, a chronological interval of some thousand years separates the old tradition of the sons of Pándu from the modern fiction of their visit to the city of Váranávata. A better judgment, however, will be formed after a brief narrative of the events which are said to have transpired, and which may now be related as follows:—

Before the Pándavas departed out of the city of Hastinapur, their uncle Vidura took them aside, and told them that when they arrived at the city of Váranávata they should beware of fire; and he repeated a verse to the brethren, and said:—"Should a man come to you, and repeat this verse, put your trust in him, and receive him as a man sent by me for your deliverance." After many days the five Pándavas, and their mother Kuntí, reached the city of Váranávata; and very speedily their eyes were opened to a wicked plot which had been devised by Duryodhana and his friends. That jealous Chieftain, ever bent upon the destruction of his kinsmen, had sent on a trusty retainer, named Purochana, to prepare a handsome house in the city of Váranávata for the reception of the sons of Pándu; and Purochana had been secretly commanded to fill the house with hemp and resin, and to plaster the walls with a mortar of grease and pitch; so that some night, when the Pándavas and their mother were fast asleep, the doors might be closely fastened on the outside, and the house set on fire, and all within it be consumed in the flames. Accordingly Purochana welcomed the Pándavas with every sign of rejoicing; and he conducted them first to the College of holy men, where they paid every respect and reverence to the devotees, and received their blessings and good wishes in return; and next he led them to the house prepared for their reception, and presented each of them with a collation and fruit, together with gold and jewels, silks and cloths, as is customary among the Rajas. Yudhishtíra was amazed at the splendour of the habitation, but he began to smell the mortar, and told his suspicions to his brother Bhíma. After this a man came from Vidura, and repeated the verse which had been agreed upon, and said:—"Vidura has sent me to dig an under-ground passage from your house, to deliver you from it should it be set on fire." So after much discourse together, they secretly employed the man to dig a passage under-ground, by which they could escape out of the house, should the dwelling be set on fire and the doors be locked on the outside. When the under-ground passage

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Extraordinary
plot of the Kur-
avans to burn
the Pandavas in
their house at
Váranávata.

Details of the
magnificent re-
ception of the
Pándavas at Vá-
ranávata.

Suspicious of
Yudhishtíra.

Digging of a sub-
terranean pas-
sage.

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Bhíma anticipates the plot by burning the house of Purochana. Kuntí gives a feast to the poor.

House of the Pándavas catches fire.

Escape of the Pándavas and Kuntí into the jungle.

oy of the Kauravas, and sorrow of the elders at the supposed death of the Pándavas.

Story of the visit of the Pándavas to Váranásvata, to be referred to the later age of Brahmanism.

Burning a sleeping enemy totally opposed to Kshatriya ideas.

was all complete, Bhíma resolved that he would work upon Purochana, who was living in a house close by, all the mischief that Purochana was meditating against himself and brethren. Now it so happened that one day Kuntí invited all the poor people of the city, and gave them a feast; and amongst her guests was a Bhíl woman and her five sons, who, according to the practice of their tribe, drank a large quantity of strong liquor, and then lay down and slept heavily. That same night a violent wind arose, and Bhíma stole out through the passage, and strongly barricaded the house of Purochana, and set it on fire; and the flames speedily destroyed the building and reached the house of the Pándavas; and Bhíma then conducted his mother and brethren through the passage under-ground, and hurried them away into the jungle. Next morning the people of the city saw that both houses were destroyed by fire, and believed that all the inmates had perished; for they discovered the blackened remains of Purochana and his servants, and also those of the Bhíl woman and her five sons, whom they took to be those of Kuntí and the Pándavas. The tidings soon reached the city of Hastinápur, and the Kauravas rejoiced greatly at the supposed death of their enemies the Pándavas; but Bhíshma, Drona, and Dhritaráshtira were affected even unto tears.

It would be presumptuous perhaps to state positively that there is no foundation whatever for this story in the original and authentic legend; yet it bears such evident traces of being entirely composed in the later age of Brahmanical revival, that it is impossible to escape the inference. The whole story turns upon burning the house of kinsmen, whilst those kinsmen are asleep inside; and this idea would be altogether repugnant to the sentiment of honour which undoubtedly prevailed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, who regarded an

attack upon a sleeping enemy as a heinous crime.¹ But at the same time, this idea would be perfectly familiar to the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata; who had only recently engaged in burning down the monasteries and temples of the Buddhists with all the deadly hate of religious persecutors. Again, the subordinate details of the fiction refer, in every way, to a later and more luxurious age. The city of Váranávata is said to have been famous for gold and jewels. The College of holy men to which the Pándavas were introduced on their arrival, is either Buddhist or Brahmanical; and so, too, is the feast given by Kuntí to all the poor of the city; whilst the alleged magnificence of the house in which the Pándavas were lodged, and the presents of gold and jewels, silks and cloths, belong altogether to a late period of Hindú civilization. The story of the Bhíl woman and her five sons who were burnt alive in the house, and originated the rumour that the Pándavas and their mother had perished in the flames, is also precisely one of those artificial turns in a narrative which betray the hand of the romancer or novelist. Altogether, it seems most probable that the whole story is a later fiction, introduced for the sole purpose of associating the Pándavas with the famous city of Váranávata.²

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Familiar to the age when the Bráhmans persecuted the Buddhists.

Subordinate details to be also ascribed to a later age.

The fiction inserted to associate the Pándavas with the city of Váranávata.

Having made their escape from the city of Váranávata, the Pándavas are said to have disguised

Alleged escape of the Pándavas from the city of Váranávata into the great jungle.

¹ Compare the story of the terrible revenge of Aswattháma, in the night of the last day of the great war; where it will be seen that Aswattháma, even whilst bent upon being revenged on the murderer of his father, awoke his sleeping enemy before slaying him.

² An extraordinary well, or under-ground passage, still exists in the Fort at Alláhábád, and is pointed out as the veritable passage through which the Pándavas made their way out of the burning house between thirty and forty centuries ago.

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Pándavas to be
regarded as the
representatives
of the Aryan
race.

Progress of the
Aryan invasion
from the Punjab
to Alláhábád.

Later legends of
the wars of the
Aryans against
the aborigines,
tacked on to the
story of the great
war.

Ancient wars to
be found
amongst the ear-
liest traditions
of every people.

themselves as Bráhmans, and to have proceeded with all haste into the great jungle. Now if the Pándavas may be accepted as the representatives of the Aryan race, it would appear from the story that they had advanced far away to the eastward of the Aryan outpost at Hastinápur, and had almost reached the centre of the land of aborigines. This direction was undoubtedly the very one which was eventually taken by the Aryan invaders; that is, they pushed their way from the Punjab towards the south-east, along the fertile valleys of the Ganges and Jumná, until they arrived at the junction of the two rivers at Alláhábád. Probably, as already indicated, this migration occupied a vast period of unrecorded time, and the Aryans may not have reached Alláhábád until ages after the Kauravas and Pándavas had fought their famous battle for the little Raj at Hastinápur. But when the story of the war of the Mahá Bhárata had been converted into a national tradition, it seems not unlikely that the legends of the later wars waged by the Aryans against the aborigines during their progress towards the south-east, would be tacked on to the original narrative. This process appears to have been carried out by the compilers of the Mahá Bhárata; and although, as will be seen hereafter, the adventures of the Pándavas in the jungle, and their encounters with Asuras and Rákshasas, are all palpable fictions, still they are valuable as traces which have been left in the minds of the people of the primitive wars of the Aryans against the aborigines.

The adventures of a band of warlike emigrants whilst seeking for new homes amongst an aboriginal population have been generally found amongst the

earliest events in the history of a people. These wars, however, have rarely been recorded with truthful simplicity by a prose annalist, but have generally fallen into the hands of bards, whose object was rather to gratify their audience than to instruct them in authentic history. Sometimes when the national legends have corresponded to the national religion, the narrative has assumed a historic form, as in the conquests of Joshua, and to some extent in the lives of Samson, of Gideon, and of Jephthah. But when the national religion has undergone modifications, as in the case of Greece and Rome, the legends have been remodelled by poets and dramatists, and converted into religious myths. Still further, when the old religion has been driven out altogether, and a new and radically foreign religion like Christianity has taken its place, the traditions of forgotten wars have been left in the hands of ballad singers and beldames, and consequently have been converted into barbarous nursery stories of giants and ogres. This latter fate has certainly befallen the traditions of forgotten wars in Europe; and a similar fate has befallen the Hindú traditions of the wars between the Aryans and aborigines.

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National traditions preserved when corresponding to the national religion.

Remodelled by changes in the religion.

Converted into nursery stories when the old religion has been driven out by a new one.

It is somewhat remarkable that the general similarity of circumstances under which Hindú and European traditions of primitive wars have been exaggerated and modified, has resulted in a striking similarity in the fictions themselves. They are characterized by the same rude vigour of imagination; and consequently present the same extravagant pictures of the horrible combined with a broad sense of humour, which are precisely fitted to the tastes of an uncultivated people. In the Hindú fictions the

Striking similarity between Hindú and European traditions of forgotten wars.

Characteristics of Hindú fiction.

Wars of Bhima as the representative of the Aryan settlers against the aborigines.

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aborigines are described under the names of Asuras and Rákshasas, as being giants and cannibals, and of course hideously repulsive; whilst the Aryan settlers, of whom Bhíma as the strongest man of the Pándavas is pre-eminently the type, are represented as overcoming their enemy by strength of arm, and under circumstances of rough comicality not unlike those which sometimes appear in a Christmas pantomime. It need scarcely be added that such stories are exceedingly popular with the Hindús; and indeed the degree to which the alternations of mirth and wonder are excited, is scarcely conceivable excepting by those who can sympathize in the undoubting and childish credulity of the masses.

Popularity of
the fictions.

Historic value of
the fictions, as
illustrations of
the period in
which they were
composed,
other than as
belonging
to the period to
which they refer.

To reject such stories as unfitted to the dignity of history would be to lose some valuable glimpses into the inner life of ancient nations. The narratives may be palpable fictions, but they are true to an element of human nature; that element which leads the imagination to depict circumstances, not as they are, but as they would be best received in the times in which they are related. Histories of every description must be especially regarded from this point of view. The question of how far they represent the real facts of the period to which they refer is doubtless of primary importance, but it is nearly as important to consider how far they illustrate the ideas, the feelings, and the judgments of the age in which they were produced; for histories in general represent far more truthfully the spirit of the period in which they are written than the facts of the period to which they refer. Accordingly in relating the stories of Bhíma's adventures with the Asuras, the attention should be divided between the mirthful and

Interest to be
divided between
the fictions and
the audiences to
whom they are
related.

Action of the
narrator in
heightening the
interest of the
fiction.

marvellous incidents on the one hand, and the open-mouthed audiences on the other; between the grotesque and horrible scenes, and the alternate laughter and terror of the men, women, and children who are looking on. Nor must the narrator of the story be entirely forgotten; for the sympathies which exist between the Hindú story-teller, and the events he is describing, and the people to whom he is telling his tale of wonder, would be almost inconceivable to the European who may read a history aloud without action and without vivacity. Thus in the opening scene of the first fiction, where the giant Bhíma is carrying his mother and three brothers through a dreadful forest haunted with wild beasts and Asuras, an enthusiastic narrator will represent Bhíma by carrying two children on his back and one under each arm; and will moreover imitate the roaring of lions and tigers, and indulge in hideous grimaces to indicate the cannibal propensities of the Asuras. With these preliminary observations, the attention may now be directed to the stories themselves. The first fiction is as follows:—

Now when the Pándavas escaped from the burning house in the city of Váranávata, they proceeded in all haste towards the southern jungle, which was inhabited by wild beasts, and also by Rákshasas and Asuras, who were eaters of men. And Kuntí and all her sons, excepting Bhíma, were very weary; but Bhíma was tall and strong, and he carried his mother and elder brother on his back, and one of his younger brethren under each of his arms, whilst Arjuna followed close behind. Next morning they passed along the western bank of the river Ganges, and proceeded more and more towards the south, until they reached a very dark and dreadful forest; and all, excepting Bhíma, were so overpowered with sleep that they threw themselves beneath

1st Fiction.
Bhíma's encounter with Hidimba, the Asura.

Bhíma carries his mother and three brethren through the great forest.

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Description of
the hideous Asu-
ra Hidimba, and
his beautiful sis-
ter Hidimbi.

Hidimbi's pro-
posals to Bhima.

Battle between
Bhima and Hi-
dimba.

Horrible death
of the Asura.

Hidimbi en-
treates Bhima to
take her as his
wife.

a tree, and were soon in a profound slumber, whilst Bhíma stood by to guard them. It so happened that hard by was the abode of a terrible Asura and man-eater, named Hidimba, who had yellow eyes and a horrible aspect, but who possessed great strength; and he had a sister, named Hidimbi, who was very tall and handsome. Now the cannibal Hidimba smelt human beings in the neighbourhood of his den, and he sent out his sister to bring them in; but when she saw the long arms and mighty form of Bhíma, resplendent with royal vestments and rich jewels, she fell in love with him, and straightway proposed to carry him away into the jungle upon her back, and to leave the others for her brother to devour. But Bhíma refused to desert his mother and brethren in such extremity, and declared himself willing to fight the Asura. Whilst he was thus speaking, the monster came up furious with wrath at the delay of his sister, and engaged in battle with Bhíma. First the Asura and Bhíma fought with fists; then they tore up trees and cudgelled each other; and then, when all the trees had been torn up and broken to pieces, they attacked each other with vast stones. The Pándavas were awakened by the noise of the combat, and Arjuna came up to help his brother; but at that moment Bhíma seized the Asura by the waist, and whirled him round several times, and dashed out his brains against the ground; and then holding his head under one arm he so belaboured him with his fist that he broke every bone in his body.

Then the sister of the Asura set up a cry so terrible that the wild beasts of the jungle fled away from fear; but after a while, when she saw that Bhíma was leaving the place together with his mother and brethren, she ceased her cries and began to follow them. And Bhíma desired her to return to the abiding-place of her brother; but she replied that as she had chosen him for her husband, she would never leave him, but henceforth be his faithful slave. She then threw herself at the feet of Kuntí, and wept bitterly, and said:—"O lady, command your son to take me as his wife, for I have known no man; and if he refuse to take me

I will kill myself, and my blood will be upon your head." So Kuntí, believing that the strong Asura woman, experienced in the jungle, would greatly help them in their sojournings, desired Bhíma to marry her; and Bhíma took Hidimbi as his wife, and the marriage rites were duly performed by his elder brother Yudhishtira. And Bhíma took his newly married wife, and went away to a beautiful spot on a mountain, where the flowers were blooming and a crystal stream was flowing, and the trees were laden with fruits of the choicest description; and there Hidimbi brought him every day such prodigious quantities of excellent food that he rejoiced exceedingly. And in due course a son was born to them as robust as his parents; and Bhíma then returned with his wife to his mother and brethren, and presented his sturdy infant to the delighted Kuntí.

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Marriage rites
performed by
Yudhishtira.

Extraordinary
honeymoon of
Bhíma and Hi-
dimbi.

The foregoing fiction is chiefly remarkable for the downright plainness of the points of interest. The gloomy forest, the wild beasts, the cannibals, the strong man carrying his mother and brethren, the terrible Asura and his handsome sister, the triumph of Bhíma, the outspoken desire of the handsome Asura to become the wife of the strong man, the marriage, the honeymoon, and the birth of a boy; all follow one another with a simplicity which is as charming as a story invented by a child. The death to which the Asura is subjected is especially worthy of notice, for it is not only mythical in itself, but is sufficient to indicate a myth. In the authentic tradition of the great war it will be seen that Bhíma beheaded his enemy and drank his blood; but in the myths he either whirls his enemy round and dashes out his brains, or rends him asunder, or kneads up his flesh, blood, and bones into an extraordinary ball. A modern critic might also object to the im-

Review of the
first fiction.

Extreme sim-
plicity of the
points of inter-
est.

Extraordinary
mode in which
Bhíma destroy-
ed the Asura.

Improbabilities
in the story.

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Further proofs
that the narra-
tive is a fiction,
originating in
the Buddhist
period.

in the jungle during a lengthened honeymoon, which included the birth of a son. There is no necessity however for bringing forward further proofs that the whole story is fictitious. The fact that shortly afterwards Bhíma marries again without any reference to his Asura wife; and that neither his Asura wife, nor his son by her, ever re-appear in the authentic tradition, will suffice to indicate that it is a later addition to the main tradition. As regards the date of its composition, it should probably be referred to the Buddhist period, when caste distinctions were not generally recognized. The story of the marriage of Bhíma with an Asura woman may have been fictitious, but still the fiction could only have found currency at a time when the union of a Kshatriya to an Asura was not foreign to the national sentiment, and when caste ideas, such as at present exist, did not prevail. The second fiction may now be related as follows:—

Fiction.
...s en-
ter with
aka the Asura.

Life of the Pán-
davas as mendi-
cant Bráhmans
in the city of
Ekachakrá.

Legendary vo-
cacity of Bhíma.

Now when Bhíma had returned to his mother and brethren, the sage Vyása suddenly appeared to them, and advised them to dwell in the city of Ekachakrá; so they departed out of the jungle, and took up their abode in that city, and dwelt there for a long time in the house of a Bráhman. Every day the brothers went out in the disguise of mendicant Bráhmans to collect food as alms, and whatever was given to them they brought home at night to their mother Kuntí, who thereupon divided the whole into two equal portions, and gave one to the wolf-stomached Bhíma, whilst the remaining half sufficed for all the others. One day the Pándavas and their mother heard a great noise of weeping and wailing in the house in which they were dwelling, and Kuntí and her sons entered the apartments of the Bráhman, and found their host and his wife, together with their son and daughter, in an agony of grief. On inquiring the cause they were told that a great Asura Raja,

named Vaka, lived near the city, and forced the Raja of that city to send him a great quantity of provisions every day, as well as a man to accompany the provisions; and that Vaka every day devoured the man as well as the provisions; and that on that very day the family of the Bráhmaṇ was required to supply the man. Then the Bráhmaṇ said that he would go himself and be devoured by the Asura, but he wept very bitterly at the hardness of his destiny. Then the wife and daughter of the Bráhmaṇ, each in her turn, prayed that she might go in his room, but he would not suffer either, and they all three lifted up their voices and wept very sore. Now the Bráhmaṇ had an infant son who could scarcely speak, and when the little lad saw that his parents were very sorrowful, he broke off a pointed blade of grass, and said with a prattling voice:—"Weep not, my father, weep not, my mother, for with this spike I will kill the man-eating Asura." At this sight Kuntí bade the family dry their tears, for that one of her sons would go to the Asura; but the Bráhmaṇ said:—"You are Bráhmaṇs, and especially my guests; and if I go myself I am obeying the dictates of the Raja, but if I send one of you, I cause the death of a Bráhmaṇ, and of one who is my guest, and I do an act which is abhorred by the gods." Kuntí answered:—"The Asura will have no power over my son Bhíma, and I will send him to destroy the cannibal." And the Bráhmaṇ consented. Then Bhíma obeyed the commands of his mother with great joy. He set out with the ordained quantity of provisions, consisting of a waggon-load of kichri, a fine buffalo, and a huge jar of ghee, and he went on until he came to the banyan tree under which Vaka was accustomed to eat his meals. And a crowd of people followed him, for all were desirous of seeing the coming combat, but when they beheld the banyan tree they fled away in great terror. Bhíma then proceeded to eat up all the victuals that were in the waggon, and to re-fill it with dirt; and he then drank up all the ghee, and re-filled the jar with water of the vilest description. When he had finished, Vaka came forward ravenous with hunger, with two large bloodshot eyes as big

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Vaka, the Asura, demands a human victim every day from the city of Ekachakrā.

Pathetic description of the family of a Bráhmaṇ, who were required to furnish a human victim.

Bhíma's serio-comic preparations for doing battle with the Asura.

Disappointment and wrath of the Asura.

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The battle.

Bhíma rends
Vaka asunder.

Submission of
the subjects of
the Asura.

The Pándavas
depart out of the
city of Ekachakra.

Review of the
second fiction.
Painful realism
of the narrative.

as saucers, and a jaw gaping open like a cave; and Vaka uncovered the waggon and found that it contained nothing but dirt; and he raised the jar, and the villainous liquor poured over his face and into his gaping mouth. Then his eye fell upon Bhíma who was sitting on the ground with his back towards him, and in his rage he struck Bhíma with all his might with both fists; but Bhíma cared not for the blow, and arose up and laughed in his face. Then the Asura was in violent wrath, and he tore up a large tree by the roots, and rushed at Bhíma to demolish him; but the mighty Pándava in like manner tore up a huge tree and struck about him lustily; and each one tore up trees by the roots, and broke them to pieces against the other, until not a tree was left; and then they fought with their fists until the Asura was spent. After this Bhíma seized Vaka by the legs and rent him asunder; and the Asura expired with a bellowing cry which seemed as if it would bring the heavens about their ears. All the other Asuras, the subjects of the slain Chieftain, were then in a great terror, and came forward with their hands clasped together as suppliants to the conqueror of their Raja. So Bhíma bound them over by solemn oaths never more to eat the flesh of men, nor to injure them in any way. And he dragged the slain monster by the heels to the gate of the city, and left it there and entered the city by another way; and he went to the house of his mother and brethren, and told them all that had occurred. And when he had finished, Yudhishtira said that they must immediately leave the city, lest the people should discover who they were, and the news should reach the ears of the Kauravas that they were still alive; and accordingly they all departed out of Ekachakra, together with their mother Kuntí. Meantime the people of the place found the dead body of the Asura, and shouted with joy; but when they learnt that the brethren had left the city they were very sorrowful, as they were eager to show their gratitude to their deliverer.

This extraordinary fiction is a striking reflex of the mind of the Hindú. There is a horrible realism

in the description of Yaka, the cannibal, which is immediately succeeded by one of the most pathetic scenes which ever presented itself to the imagination of the poet. The shrinking of the poor Bráhmaṇ from his impending fate, and the weeping and groaning of the wife and daughter, might easily have been suggested to ordinary minds; but the introduction of the little boy waving his spear of grass in childish anger at the Asura is not only an exquisite touch of nature, but an affecting illustration of that warm affection for children, and deep sympathy in all their thoughts and ways, which are the special characteristics of the Hindú. The transition from profound sorrow to the most intense delight is another curious feature in the narrative. Whilst the women and children in the Hindú audience have been shedding real tears, and even weeping violently, in pity for the poor Bráhmaṇ and his wife and daughter, they never fail to laugh obstreperously at the preliminary proceedings of Bhíma for exciting the wrath of the Asura, and to raise a perfect shout when the Asura discovers the tricks which have been played upon him, and is subsequently rent asunder by the mighty Pándava. The sequel of the story is not without historic significance with reference to the advance of the Aryans through an aboriginal population. Rude and barbarous as the Kshatriya warriors may have been, the aboriginal peoples appear to have been of a still more brutal and savage character, living in caves in the jungle, and devouring human flesh; and it is easy to conceive that when an Aryan Raja had vanquished an Asura Chieftain, he would bind over the subjects of that Chieftain to abandon their

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Masterly stroke of genius in the introduction of the Bráhmaṇ's infant son.

Hindú fondness for children.

Intense delight of a Hindú audience at the irritating proceedings of Bhíma.

Historical significance of the story, as illustrating the extension of the Aryan supremacy over the aborigines.

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Buddhist character of the story.

Distinction between the Aryans residing in cities, and the aboriginal people of the jungle.

Ekachakrá, or Arrah, 200 miles to the eastward of Váranávata, or Alláhábád.

cannibal habits, and keep the peace towards their more civilized neighbours. The date of the story may be fixed, like that of the preceding fictions, in the age of Buddhism; and the lives which the Pándavas are said to have led in the city of Ekachakrá is precisely that of Buddhist priests carrying round the alms bowl.

There is another point in connection with this mythical narrative of the first exile of the Pándavas, which must not be passed over in silence, namely, the distinction between the city and the jungle. The cities of Váranávata and Ekachakrá, the modern Alláhábád and Arrah, were each occupied by Bráhmans, who may be regarded as the later representatives of the Aryan population, whilst the jungle was evidently in the possession of the Asuras or aborigines. Then, again, whilst the Aryan outpost at Alláhábád seems to have maintained an ascendancy over the aborigines, or at any rate was apparently secure from their attacks; the city of Arrah, which was two hundred miles further to the eastward, was compelled to pay a daily tribute of provisions to the Raja of the Asuras.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

AFTER Bhíma's battle with Vaka, the narrative again changes from fiction to reality ; and the reader is somewhat suddenly transplanted from the region of fancy in eastern India, to the north-west country of authentic tradition, of which Hastinápur may be regarded as the centre. The events which followed may therefore be received as being more or less based upon actual fact. They refer to the marriage of the five Pándavas to one wife, who was the daughter of that Raja Drupada of Panchála, whom they had themselves reduced to submission at the instance of their tutor Drona. The whole story is so foreign to modern ideas, and at the same time so suggestive and significant, that it must be regarded as forming one of the most important traditions in the Mahá Bhárata. The narrative, however, has undergone so many modifications in order to bring it into conformity with later ideas, that it will be necessary hereafter to subject all its details to careful investigation, in order that the historical significance of the legend can be fully apprehended without doing an injustice to the moral sense of the modern Hindus.

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Narrative reverts from fiction to authentic tradition.

Important story of the marriage of the five Pándavas to Draupadi, daughter of Raja Drupada.

Extensive modifications of the tradition in order to reconcile the polyandry with modern ideas of morality.

The first anomaly which attracts the attention

HISTORY OF
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Polyandry, an
institution still
existing in Thi-
bet.

Three different
theories of the
origin of the in-
stitution.

(1.) Division of
land amongst
families.

(2.) Absenteeism
of some of the
brothers on pas-
turing expedi-
tions.

(3.) Scarcity of
women amongst
a military class
of foreign emi-
grants.

in connection with this marriage, is the idea of polyandry as an institution ; an idea which is certainly involved in the marriage of five brothers to one wife. But this practice, repulsive as it is to all civilized ideas, whether Hindú or European, is still the custom amongst the Buddhists of Thibet ; where the elder brother possesses the exclusive privilege of choosing a wife, who henceforth becomes the joint wife of all the brothers of the family. The origin of this depraved institution has been ascribed to various causes. It is said to have been adopted as a means for preventing any undue increase in the members of the family ; an object of some importance when the whole means of subsistence possessed by a family is drawn from a certain definite area of cultivated land. Again, it may have sprung up amongst a pastoral people, where men are frequently away from their homes for many months at a time, either to seek new pastures for their cattle, or to dispose of the cattle amongst the people of the plains ; and where, consequently, these duties would be undertaken by the brethren in turns, so that whilst some were away with the cattle, others would remain at home with the joint wife of the family. Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, however, the practice may have arisen from another cause. They were essentially a martial and a conquering race, amongst whom the ties of domestic life are always less valued than amongst a more industrious and settled population. They had migrated at some primeval epoch from their cradle in Central Asia to seek new homes to the eastward of the Indus ; and under such circumstances they would naturally bring with them as many women as possible. But whilst

the sexual instinct will yield for a time to that more imperious instinct which drives men to seek subsistence in a foreign soil, it will speedily find a gratification even in the most revolting practices, unless controlled by the dictates of sentiment or reason.¹

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Another institution in connection with the Pándavas, is the Swayamvara of Draupadī, the lady to whom they were united. The Swayamvara has already been noticed, but a few additional explanations appear to be necessary. Amongst a military class, where women are pre-eminently looked upon as passive instruments of pleasure, and, consequently, as objects of value, they will be specially regarded as the prizes of skill or valour. In war, the wife or daughter of a vanquished enemy became the lawful prize of the conqueror, and was compelled to wait upon him as her lord and master. In peace the daughter of a Kshatriya was permitted to choose a husband for herself amongst a crowd of candidates for her hand; or was given as a prize to that warrior who proved most skilful in the use of the bow, and who, consequently, would be the most powerful protector. The difficulty of reconciling

The Swayam-
vara; origin of
the institution.

Women regard-
ed as prizes.

¹ The earlier Buddhist legends preserved in the Mahawansi present a curious instance of these illicit marriages. Four brothers retired into the jungle with their five sisters, in order to make way for the succession of a younger son of their father by a young and favourite wife. They settled near the hermitage of Kapila the sage, dwelling in huts made of branches of trees, and subsisting on the produce of the chase. Ultimately, they appointed their eldest sister Priya to be Queen mother, and then each one married one of his sisters not born of the same mother. In this manner they founded the city of Knpilapur. The eldest sister Priya ultimately retired on account of leprosy and married a Raja of Benares. See *ante*, p. 69, note.

This legend may be a Buddhist perversion of the more ancient Kshatriya tradition. It will be seen hereafter that the five Pándavas married Draupadī at the city of Kámpilya. According, however, to the Matsya Purāna it was at the city of Kapila.

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Decay of the two
institutions of
Polyandry and
the Swayamvara.

the institution of polyandry with that of the Swayamvara, will be duly indicated in the course of the narrative. Both have long since passed into disuse. As the Kshatriyas established themselves in the land, the true instinct which leads a man to seek for a wife, who shall be specially and entirely his own, gradually asserted itself, or only yielded in a later age to that mistaken idea of pleasure which leads the mere sensualist to indulge in a change of partners. At the same time, the feuds and bloodshed which frequently accompanied or followed a Swayamvara, in consequence of the jealous wrath which such assemblies were eminently calculated to excite, naturally led to the decline of the institution, and to the introduction of the custom of contracting infant marriages by which such outrages were effectually avoided.

With these preliminary explanations, the tradition of the Swayamvara of Draupadī may now be related as follows :—

Tradition of the
Swayamvara of
Draupadī.

Beauty of
Draupadī.

Now when the Pándavas had departed out of the city of Ekachakrá, they journeyed to another city, where they found every man discoursing upon the approaching Swayamvara of the beautiful Princess Draupadī, the only daughter of Drupada, the Raja of Panchála. And all the people said that this damsel was the loveliest in all the world, and as radiant and graceful as if she had but just descended from the city of the gods ; and that all the Rajas from the four quarters of the earth would be present at the Swayamvara, and would seek to win so beautiful a damsel for a wife. Then the five Pándavas were all deeply stricken by what they heard of Draupadī, and they all resolved to attend her Swayamvara ; and they could not sleep all that night for thinking of the damsel. And when it was early morning they left their mother Kuntī at a house, under the charge of a

The Pándavas
resolve to at-
tend.
Engage Dha-
umya to be their
family priest,
and leave Kuntī
in his charge.

Bráhmian whose name was Díttaumya, whom they had engaged to be their Purohita, or family priest; and they set off with all speed for the city of Kámpilya, which was the city of the Raja Drupada. And when they reached that city they found a vast number of Rajas encamped, with a great host of troops and elephants, and multitudes of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, travelling merchants, showmen, and spectators. And there was set apart without the city a large plain enclosed by barriers, in which the Rajas were to exhibit their skill in archery; and around the plain were many glittering pavilions for the lodging of the more distinguished guests, and also raised galleries from whence to behold the performances. And at one end of the plain was a tall pole, and on the top of this pole was a golden fish, and below the golden fish was a chakra ever whirling round; and the rule of the Swayamvara was, that whoever discharged an arrow through the chakra at the first shot, and struck the eye of the golden fish, that man should be the husband of the daughter of Raja Drupada.

The city of Kámpilya.

The great plain.

Pavilions for the suitors.

The golden fish.

Rule of the Swayamvara.

: After sixteen days of sports and feasting the morning of the Swayamvara dawned upon the city of Kámpilya; and at the rising of the sun, gorgeous flags were waving in every quarter, and the city was awakened by the sounding of trumpets and beating of drums. Then all the people of the city gathered together upon the plain, and assembled round the barriers; and the well-armed soldiers of the Raja maintained the most perfect order, whilst dancers and showmen, jugglers and musicians, actors and athletes, wrestlers and swordsmen, delighted the spectators by their various performances. Presently the Rajas and Chieftains took their appointed seats in the galleries; and there the Pándavas beheld their bitter enemies, who thought them dead, the Raja Duryodhana, the ambitious Karna, and many Kaurava Chieftains. There also were the two great Princes of the Yádava tribe, reigning at Dwáráká,—the amorous Krishná, and his elder brother, the wine-drinking Balaráma. From the west came Jayadratha, Raja of Sindhu, and the two sons of the Raja of Gandhára. From the east came Vatsaraja,

Morning of the Swayamvara.

Public rejoicings.

Exhibitions of dancers, showmen, jugglers, musicians, actors, athletes, wrestlers, and swordsmen.

Catalogue of the Rajas.

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Feasting of the
Rajas.

Draupadī con-
ducted into the
area by her bro-
ther Dhṛishṭa-
dyumna.

Vedic hymns.

Dhṛishṭa-dyūm-
proclaims the
conditions of the
Swayamvara.

Recites the
names and line-
age of his sister's
suitors.

The garland.

Reluctance of
the Rajas to
commence the
trial.

Raja of Kosala,—Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá,—and Vasudeva, Raja of Paundra. From the south came Sisupála, Raja of Chedi,—Viráta, Raja of Viráta,—and Salya, Raja of Madra. Besides these were a host of other Rajas, too numerous to mention. And provisions of every sort were served up to the guests in the galleries; whilst cup-bearers went round distributing and sprinkling rose water, sandal, odoriferous woods, and other sweet perfumes.

After a while the moment arrived when the young Princess was to exhibit herself in all her loveliness to those who hoped to gain her for a bride; and the beautiful damsel was dressed in elegant array, and adorned with radiant gems, and led into the arena, carrying in her hand the garland which she was to throw over the neck of that fortunate hero who might have the fortune to win her to be his wife. Then the different quires of Bráhmans chaunted Vedic hymns to the glory and praise of the gods, and filled the heavens and the earth with the music of their prayers. After this, and amidst a universal silence, the Prince Dhṛishṭa-dyumna, who was the brother of Draupadī, stood by the side of his resplendent sister, and proclaimed that whoever shot the arrow through the chakra in the first attempt, and struck the eye of the golden fish, should have the Princess for his wife. The Prince then told into the ears of Draupadī the name and lineage of every one of her suitors; and he also told her in the hearing of all, that she must place the garland round the neck of that man who struck the fish, and accept him for her husband from that day. Dhṛishṭa-dyumna then turned to the Rajas and Chieftains, and said:—"Here stands this lady, my sister; whoever feels confident in his skill and strength that he can hit the mark in a single trial, let him arise and fulfil the conditions of the Swayamvara."

At these words the Rajas arose from their seats and approached the pole on which the golden fish was fixed; and the chakra below it was ever turning round; and they viewed the strong and heavy bow from which the arrow was to be discharged. Now every man was jealous of the other, and yet for a long while no Chieftain would take up the bow,

Failure of the
suitors to bend
the bow.

Karna enters
the lists and
strings the bow.

Extraordinary
interference of
Draupadi, on ac-
count of the low
birth of Karna.

Karna appeals
to the Sun.

Other Rajas fail
to bend the bow.

Sudden appear-
ance of Arjuna,
disguised as a
Bráhmán.

Real Bráhmans
dissuade Arjuna,
lest the Rajas
should be of-
fended.

lest he should fail to bend it, and thus excite the laughter of the multitude. Presently a Raja stepped before his fellows and tried to bend the bow, but could not; and another and yet another essayed in like manner to string the bow, but all were alike unable so to do because of its great size and strength. Then many of the Rajas made the attempt, and they strained themselves to the very uttermost, casting aside their robes and collars, and putting forth their whole strength, but not one amongst them could bend the bow. Then the ambitious Karna entered the lists, and, to the surprise and discomfiture of all who were there, he bent the bow and fitted the shaft to the string; but whilst all were alarmed, the proud Draupadí was resolved that no son of a charioteer should become her lord; and she cried out with a loud voice:—"I wed not with the base-born!" And Karna was abashed, for he knew the lowness of his birth; but whilst bursting with rage and bitterness he walked out of the arena with a smile; and looking towards the Sun, he said:—"O Sun, bear witness that I throw away the arrow, not because I cannot shoot through the chakra, and strike the eye of the golden fish, but because Draupadí would not accept me for her husband even if I performed the feat." Then Sisupála, the Raja of Chedi, and Jarásandha, the famous Raja of Magadhá, tried one after the other to bend the bow, but they both failed; and all the other Chieftains, seeing that the feat was beyond the strength of such mighty Rajas, dared not make the venture lest they too should provoke the laughter and derision of the multitude.

All this time the Pándavas had been standing amongst the crowd disguised as Bráhmans, but suddenly Arjuna advanced and lifted the bow; and a cry of astonishment ran through the assembly at seeing a Bráhmán attempt to compete at a Swayamvara. Some there were who jeered at Arjuna, and said:—"Shall a Bráhmán do this great thing which all the mighty Rajas have failed to do?" Others cried:—"Unless the Bráhmán knew his own strength and skill he would not make the essay." And all the real Bráhmans that were present were fearful lest the attempt

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Arjuna mentally
prays to Drona,
and strikes the
golden fish.

Acclamations of
the multitude,
and delight of
the Bráhmans.

Draupadi ac-
knowledges Ar-
juna as the vic-
tor.

Wrath and mor-
tification of the
Rajas at being
beaten by a
Bráhman.

Pierce battle be-
tween the Rajas
and Pándavas.

Mediation of
Krishna.

Arjuna and his
brothers lead
away Draupadi.

should offend the Rajas, so that the Rajas should give them no gifts, and they entreated Arjuna to withdraw; but Arjuna was heedless alike of words of blame and words of encouragement, and he offered up a mental prayer to his tutor Drona, and then bent the bow and drew the cord, and fitting the arrow to the string, he discharged it through the centre of the chakra, and struck the eye of the golden fish. Then a roar of acclamations arose from that vast assembly like the crash and roll of distant thunder, and the Bráhmans waved their scarfs in the greatness of their delight, and the drums and trumpets filled the air with joyous music. And the beautiful Draupadí was filled with joy and wonder at the youth and grace of the hero who had struck the golden fish; and she came forward as she had been commanded by her brother, and threw the garland round the neck of Arjuna, and permitted him to lead her away according to the rule of the Swayamvara.

But meanwhile the Rajas were lashing themselves into fury, and they cried out:—"Could not a Raja win the damsel, and are we to be humbled by a Bráhman? Is Raja Drupada to invite us to the Swayamvara, and then to give his daughter to a Bráhman? A Raja's daughter must ever choose a Kshatriya for her husband, and shall a Bráhman trespass upon our right? The Bráhman's life is sacred, but down with the guilty race of Drupada!" With these cries they gathered round Raja Drupada with angry countenances and naked swords, and threatened to burn the Princess upon a pile unless she choose a Kshatriya for her husband. But the Pándavas rushed to the rescue of Drupada, and performed prodigies of valour against the Rajas, and a crowd of Bráhmans pressed round to support them. At this moment Krishna, Prince of Dwáraká, saw through the disguise of the five brothers, and in gentle words he allayed the wrath of the angry Rajas, and gave his judgment that Draupadí had been fairly won; and the Rajas returned from the field in sullen anger, and the Pándavas were permitted to depart with the beautiful Draupadí who had become the prize of Arjuna.

At evening time the Pándavas arrived at the house where they had left their mother Kuntí, and they said to her:—"O mother, we have made a fine acquisition this day." Then Kuntí thought in her heart that her sons had brought home much victual, and she said:—"Go and share it, you five brothers, amongst yourselves, and eat it." To this Yudhishthira replied:—"O mother, what is this you have said? Arjuna has this day gained a damsel at her Swayamvara." Then Arjuna took Draupadí by the hand, and led her forward, and laid her at the feet of his mother. And Kuntí said:—"I have committed a grievous fault in saying, 'Go you five brothers and share it among you, and eat it.'" She then turned to Yudhishthira and said:—"O my son, the words have escaped my lips; and now you must some way contrive that they may be verified, and at the same time that you yourselves may not be involved in crime." Yudhishthira remained in deep reflection for two minutes, and then said to Arjuna:—"O brother, you have obtained this maiden: Come now and let us marry her to you according to the law." Arjuna answered:—"O Yudhishthira, we are all your servants, and this damsel is worthy of being espoused by you." Yudhishthira replied:—"We must act in conformity with the will of the Almighty; and Raja Drupada has properly the disposal of his own daughter, and she shall be the wife of him upon whom her father shall please to bestow her." At these words of their eldest brother, each one of the five brethren felt an equal desire to marry the damsel.

Now when the brethren had prepared the victuals for the evening meal, Kuntí would not divide them amongst her sons as she had been accustomed to do, but desired her new daughter-in-law to undertake the duty, saying:—"O damsel, first set aside a portion for the poor, and then divide the remainder into two, and give one half to Bhíma, for he has a great appetite, and the other half divide equally among the four remaining brethren." Draupadí then distributed the victuals as she was directed, reserving a sufficiency for herself and Kuntí; but she could not forbear a smile as she

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The Pándavas inform their mother that they have gained an acquisition. Kuntí desires them to share it.

Fears the consequences of her words.

Conversation of Yudhishthira and Arjuna.

Postponement of the marriage of Draupadí.

Draupadí distributes the provisions at supper in the place of Kuntí.

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Humiliation of Raja Drupad at his daughter being won by a Bráhmaṇ.

Dhrishṭa-dyumna follows his sister to the house of the Pándavas and discovers that they are Kshatriyas.

Raja Drupada sends his Puruṣita as Envoy to the Pándavas, and invites them to his palace.

All this time Raja Drupada had been much troubled in heart that his daughter should have been won by a Bráhmaṇ, whom no one knew; and his son Dhrishṭa-dyumna had been equally anxious to learn what manner of mén they were who had led away his sister from her Swayamvara. And Dhrishṭa-dyumna had kept his eyes upon the Pándavas from the moment that Draupadí had thrown the garland round the neck of Arjuna; and he had followed them all the way to their own home, and seen his sister distribute the victuals at the evening meal, and heard the brothers discoursing about themselves and the Swayamvara. And Dhrishṭa-dyumna learnt, to his great surprise and joy, that the five brethren were not Bráhmans but Kshatriyas, and he also thought in his heart that they belonged to the royal house of Hastinápur, and he hastened back to the city of Kámpilya to acquaint his father with the glad tidings. And Raja Drupada rejoiced greatly, and early next morning he sent his family priest as envoy to the brethren to inquire who they were, and the priest went his way and put the question to the brethren. And Yudhisṭhira replied:—"Present our prayers to the Raja, and say that he may set his mind at rest, for that his daughter has allied with a family that will neither straiten him nor disgrace him, and bid him remember that no one but a man of noble birth could have shot the eye of the golden fish at the Swayamvara." Whilst Yudhisṭhira was yet speaking a second envoy arrived from Raja Drupada, saying:—"Perchance you have now become kinsmen of the Raja Drupada, and therefore he bids you honour his palace with your presence that he may entertain you as his guests." After him came a number of people with splendid chariots and horses, and besought the brethren to ascend the chariots and return with them to the city of

Kámpilya; and Yudhishtira and his brethren proceeded in one chariot, whilst Kuntí took charge of Draupadí and went with her in a chariot by themselves.

Meantime all the people of the city came out to meet the men who had carried away the daughter of their Raja at her Swayamvara. Raja Drupada came out in like manner with all his ministers and Chieftains, and when they saw the chariots of the Pándavas approaching, they alighted as a mark of respect, and Yudhishtira and his brethren did the same, and they severally saluted each other, whilst Kuntí and Draupadí joined the ladies of the palace. Raja Drupada was soon satisfied in mind by the manners and bearing of the five brethren that they were true Kshatriyas, and he ordered his servants to conduct them to the bath and to give them royal robes. After this a grand feast was prepared in the banqueting-room, and served up on dishes of gold; and there Bhíma distinguished himself greatly by eating as much as all the rest of his brethren put together.

Grand reception
of the Pándavas
by Raja Drupa-
da.

When the feast was over, Raja Drupada bestowed many gifts upon the brethren; and he said to Yudhishtira:—"I know full well that you are illustrious Rajas, but tell me, I pray you, what are your names and lineage." Yudhishtira replied:—"We are poor people, and if you deem us unworthy to ally with you, we entreat you to do as it pleases you, for we seek not to constrain you." Drupada then said:—"I adjure you by the Almighty God to tell me who you are!" So Yudhishtira told him, saying:—"We are the sons of the Raja Pándu: I am Yudhishtira, and he who won your daughter is Arjuna; and the others are Bhíma, Nakula, and Sahadeva, and the lady who brought your daughter here to-day is our mother Kuntí. Then Raja Drupada knew them all, and was filled with joy; and they told him all that had happened to them from the day of their escape from the city of Váranávata; and the Raja ordered houses to be prepared for their reception, and entertained them many days.

The Pándavas
make known
their birth and
lineage.

Joy of Raja Drupada.

After this Raja Drupada said to Yudhishtira:—"Is it your command, as the elder brother, that I give my

Yudhishtira,
as the eldest
brother, request-
ed to settle the
marriage.

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Rude merri-
ment of the oc-
casion.

Simplicity of the
Raja's daughter
in moving
amongst her
suitors.

Exercises the
right of exclud-
ing an unwel-
come suitor from
the trial.

Self-possessed
demeanour of
Draupadi an in-
dication of poly-
andry.

Modest appear-
ance of damsels
in later Swa-
yamvaras.

flags and flowers. When the feast was over the priests chaunted their mystic hymns to the gods; after which the damsel was duly presented to the assembly by her brother, and the young men were invited to try their skill with the bow. Here there was a significant pause. No one liked to shoot first lest he should be laughed at by the others; for every man who missed the mark lost all chance of the damsel, and would thus become the natural butt of a rude and boisterous crowd. At length the young men took heart and began to shoot; and meantime the damsel moved amongst them in a very simple fashion, carrying in her hand the garland of flowers which she was to throw round the neck of the successful bowman. Probably she knew most of the young men, and took not unnaturally an interest in their performances. Nor was she altogether a passive spectator; for whilst womanly pride would lead her to accept the victor as her future husband, she evidently possessed the right of rejecting an objectionable suitor, a right which she exercised in the case of Karna.

Here it may be remarked that the cool and self-possessed demeanour of Draupadī on this occasion is precisely what might have been expected in a state of society where polyandry was a recognized institution, and where the woman was to a great extent the master. In Swayamvaras of a later date the conduct of the damsel seems to have been more in accordance with the idea of one wife being married to one husband; and pictures are presented of a timid maiden moving modestly round a circle of young men, accompanied by a nurse or a father, to assist her in the delicate task of choosing a husband.

The main incident in the story, and the one which may have served to perpetuate the memory of the Swayamvara, was not so much the fact that Arjuna won the hand of Draupadī by hitting the mark, as the fact that the people all supposed him to be the son of a Bráhmaṇ. The disdain with which the ancient Kshatriyas regarded the mendicant Bráhmaṇs, presents so extraordinary a contrast to the superstitious respect with which the modern Bráhmaṇ caste is universally regarded, as to necessitate an inquiry into its cause. Originally the father of a family, or the Chieftain of a tribe, appear to have acted as priest at the family or tribal sacrifices; just as Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek offered up sacrifices to Jehovah with their own hands. Under such circumstances, when priests were first engaged to act for the father or the Chieftain, it would be in the capacity of hired servants; and a lengthened period would elapse before the mercenary priests could obtain such a superstitious hold upon the people, as to be considered of a higher grade than their royal masters. At the same time, it would seem that the Bráhmaṇs had already formed themselves into a separate community, who never practised the use of arms, and whose lives were already considered as sacred by the Kshatriyas.

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Winning of the prize by an apparent Bráhmaṇ the main incident in the tradition.

Cause of the ancient disdain in which the Bráhmaṇs were held by the Kshatriyas.

The priest originally a hireling engaged to act for the patriarch or Chieftain.

The surprise of the multitude at seeing a Bráhmaṇ attempt to compete at a Swayamvara, the fears of the obsequious Bráhmaṇs lest the Kshatriyas should be offended at the presumption of one of their order, the exultant delight of the Bráhmaṇs when Arjuna struck the golden fish, and the violent wrath of the Kshatriyas at seeing themselves distanced by a mendicant priest who lived upon their bounty, are

General commotion excited at the success of a mendicant Bráhmaṇ when the Kshatriyas had all failed.

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Natural interpretation confirmed by the sequel of the tradition.

Acknowledgment of the right of the elder brother to choose a wife for the family.

Marriage rites deferred until Raja Drupada could be consulted.

Draupadi treated during the interval as a damsel betrothed to all five brothers.

Divides the victuals at supper, in the place of Kuntí.

Arrangements for the night.

The sequel of this tradition entirely bears out this interpretation. It can be reconciled with the theory that the marriage of one wife to many brothers was an existing institution, but not with the view which the Brahmanical compilers have endeavoured to convey, namely, that such a marriage was so exceptional as to be a shock to the social sentiments of the period. Arjuna took Draupadí by the hand and laid her at the feet of Kuntí; and then plainly indicated the right of the eldest brother to choose a wife for the family by declaring that Draupadí was worthy of being espoused by Yudhishtira. It is also stated that every one of the brothers felt an equal desire to marry Draupadí; but remembering that her father Drupada had some voice in the matter, they considered it advisable to delay the actual marriage until the Raja could be consulted. Accordingly, Draupadí seems to have been treated during the interval as a damsel who was virtually betrothed to all the brothers, though not actually married. Thus when the victuals were prepared for the evening meal, Kuntí resigned her duty of dividing the food to her new daughter-in-law, according to the accustomed form; and Draupadí seems to have undertaken the duty with all the self-confidence of a lady who was henceforth to occupy the most important place in the household. She distributed the victuals to her husbands expectant, and smiled as she gave so large a proportion to the voracious Bhíma. When the evening meal was over, Draupadí retired with her mother-in-law, and slept by her side all night; a natural arrangement which precisely coincided with the extraordinary relations in which she stood towards the

family. The careful delicacy of Hindú bards as regards betrothed maidens is also exhibited in describing the next day. Yudhishtira and his brethren proceeded to the city of Kámpilya in one chariot, whilst Kuntí and Draupadí were conveyed in a chariot by themselves. The remainder of the story calls for no remark. The rights of Yudhishtira as the eldest brother were fully recognized by Raja Drupada; and with the exception of a few mythical objections, none of which were raised by Draupadí, the narrative of the marriage of one damsel to five brethren reaches a natural conclusion.

The Brahmanical myths which have been introduced in the Mahá Bhárata for the purpose of explaining away the polyandry may now be very briefly indicated. When the Pándavas were on the point of setting out for the Swayamvara, the mythical Vyása suddenly appeared to them, and told them a ridiculous story of a woman who prayed to the great god Siva five times for a good husband; upon which the god said that as she had prayed five times, he would give her five husbands in a future birth. Vyása added that this woman had been born again as Draupadí, and that the five brethren were destined to marry her. Again, when Raja Drupada was conversing with Yudhishtira about the marriage, Vyása makes his appearance in a very abrupt manner; and the mythical reception accorded to the sage, the enthronement upon a golden seat with all the Chieftains standing round him with clasped hands in token of reverence, furnishes a significant contrast to the mortification which Raja Drupada had expressed in a previous portion of the more authentic tradition at seeing his daughter Draupadí led away

Mythical stories in connection with Vyása introduced to wipe away the stain of polyandry from the early traditions of the Hindús.

Myth of the woman who prayed five times to Siva for a good husband.

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mediator in times of feud, and a consoler in times of affliction. Of course it is not altogether impossible for Krishna to have been present at the Swayamvara, or for him to have interposed to allay the wrath of the disappointed Kshatriyas; but the distance from Dwáraká to the scene of the tradition, and the rude character of Krishna as displayed in the earlier traditions, militate very strongly against the truth of the legend.

No further allusion to the exceptional character of the marriage.

Significance of the alliance, as promoting the fortunes of the Pándavas.

The narrative of the Swayamvara of Draupadí having been brought to a legitimate conclusion by her marriage, no further allusion is made to the exceptional nature of the union. Henceforth the significance of the alliance wholly turns upon the happy effects which it produced upon the fortunes of the Pándavas. Indeed, there are indications in the Mahá Bhárata that the marriage was a planned thing. Raja Drupada must have been equally as desirous of the assistance of the Pándavas in revenging himself upon Drona, as the Pándavas had been desirous of an alliance with Drupada to enable them to recover possession of the Raj. It is accordingly said that Drupada purposely selected the huge bow with which the feat of shooting the golden fish was performed, in the hope that he might thus gain Arjuna for a son-in-law, inasmuch as no one but Arjuna would be strong enough to string the bow. But the question is scarcely worth the trouble of weighing probabilities. It will be sufficient to say that the Kauravas were much alarmed at the alliance; and that the Mahárajá summoned a Council to consider what steps should be taken to meet the crisis which had occurred.

Alarm of the Kauravas at the alliance.

The ancient Councils of the Kshatriyas present a strange interest, inasmuch as they formed the germ

from which the European Parliaments of the Middle Ages undoubtedly sprang, and they still linger in Hindú capitals under the name of Durbars. Unfortunately, the speeches which have been preserved in the Mahá Bhárata are rarely characterized by the fire and dignity which is breathed from the lips of Homeric heroes; and are wholly wanting in that vigorous thought which finds expression in the orations which appear in Thucydides. Indeed, they have passed through a very different crucible, and are little better than childish conversations, not unfrequently lengthened out with Brahmanical details. But still the scene which transpired in the rude entrance Hall of the palace at Hastinápura is very suggestive. All the Chieftains of the royal house are said to have assembled on the occasion adorned with garlands. There were the grave elders desirous of peace, and the turbulent youths who were clamorous for war; whilst the weak and indulgent Mahárajá sat in their midst, his viewless orbs hopelessly turned upon the assembly. Bhíshma, the patriarch of the house, at length proposed that the Pándavas should be invited to return to Hastinápura, and that the Raj should then be divided between the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pándu. This counsel is said to have prevailed. Vidura was sent to bring the Pándavas and their wife to Hastinápura; and Raja Drupada, in behalf of his sons-in-law, was induced to agree to the terms of reconciliation. Accordingly, the Pándavas set out for Hastinápura accompanied by their mother and joint wife; and all the people of the Raj rejoiced greatly at the return of the sons of Raja Pándu, and went out in great multitudes to welcome them back to the house of their fathers.

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Primitive character of the ancient Councils of the Kshatriyas.

Inferiority of the speeches to those in Homer and Thucydides.

Scene in the Council-hall at Hastinápura.

Bhishma proposes a division of the Raj between the Kauravas and the Pándavas.

Return of the Pándavas to Hastinápura.

CHAPTER V.

REIGN OF THE PÁNDAVAS IN KHÁNDAVA-PRASTHA.

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True nature of the division of the Raj; not a division of territory, but a division of the family.

THE division of the Raj of Bhárata indicates an important event in the history of the Aryan invasion of India. It was not so much a division of territory, as a division of the family, and perchance to some extent a division of the people; one branch remaining at Hastinápura, whilst the other went out to wrest a new country from the aborigines, and clear and cultivate the lands. It has already been seen that the Raj of Hastinápura was in reality nothing more than a certain area of cultivated lands and pastures, which furnished subsistence for a band of Aryan settlers under the rule of the Mahárajá. It will now be seen that the so-called division was a migration; that the Pándavas, accompanied perhaps by servants or retainers, departed out of the country on the banks of the Ganges, and proceeded to a country on the banks of the Jumná, where they cleared the jungle, and established a Raj of their own. Before proceeding further, however, it will be necessary to reproduce the legend of the migration.

Tradition of the migration of the Pándavas to the country of Khándava-prastha.

After many days Mahárajá Dhritaráshta sent for Yudhishtira and his brethren, and said to them in the presence of Bhíshma:—"It is most proper for you to go to the country of Khándava-prastha, and I will make over to you the half of the Raj." And Bhíshma said:—"The Mahárajá

has spoken well; so go now and dwell in the country of Khándava-prastha, and take charge of your share of the Raj." So the Pándavas took their leave of the Mahárajá, and of Bhíshma, and of Drona, and of all their kinsmen, and proceeded toward the south until they came to the country of Khándava-prastha on the banks of the river Jumná; and there they built a fort, and collected such a number of inhabitants that the city resembled the city of Indra, and the city was named Indra-prastha. And the Raj of Yudhishthira and his brethren became famous throughout the world, for they punished all evil-doers, and subdued all the robbers round about them, and any one who suffered wrong went to them for succour, like children going to a father.

Pándavas found the city of Indra-prastha on the Jumná.

Their famous administration.

The first difficulty that occurs in the foregoing tradition is the confusion which exists between the division of the Raj and the migration of the Pándavas. This confusion probably originated in the application of the name of Bhárata, not to any particular Aryan settlement, but to the aggregate of settlements, and probably to an indefinite tract of unknown and unsubdued country beyond; and thus it was that the term Bhárata-varsha became gradually applied to the whole of India. Under such circumstances the Mahárajá might have made over to Pándavas the forest of Khándava, as a portion of the assumed empire of Bhárata; but after the Pándavas had once cleared the land, and established themselves in the country, the new Raj would be emphatically their own.

Origin of the confusion between the division of the Raj and the migration of the Pándavas.

A second difficulty in the tradition arises from an omission which is not without significance. The Pándavas had evidently migrated into a new country, and yet nothing whatever is said about the clearing of the jungle. Now it is difficult to conceive that such an important event should have

Omission in the tradition of all reference to the clearing of the jungle.

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Memory of the
incident pre-
served in a later
myth.

found no place in the original tradition; and yet if it had been preserved in its integrity by the later compilers, it would have undoubtedly militated against two deeply-rooted ideas, namely, that the Raj of Bhárata extended over the whole of India, and that the Kshatriyas were warriors who never stooped to the cultivation of the soil. In a later portion of the story, however, a myth has been preserved, which is entitled, "The Burning of the Forest of Khándava;" and notwithstanding the wild and absurd details of the story, it sufficiently indicates the true character of the Aryan invasion, and the occupations of the early Kshatriya settlers.¹ The essential portions of the myth may now be related as follows :—

Myth of the
burning of the
forest of Khán-
dava.
Arjuna and
Krishna hunt in
the forest.

Now it came to pass that Krishna paid a visit to the Pándavas at Indra-prastha, and Arjuna invited him to go out hunting in the great forest of Khándava. So everything was made ready, and Arjuna went out with Krishna to hunt in the great forest; and when they came to a pleasant spot they sat down and drank wine, whilst the musicians played before them, and the singers and story-tellers amused them with songs and stories. At length on a certain day a Bráhmaṇ came to Krishna and Arjuna; and he was very large and fat, and his colour was yellow, and his form was frightful to behold; but when Krishna and Arjuna saw the Bráhmaṇ they received him with great respect, and seated him beside themselves. The Bráhmaṇ then said :—"I am Agni (fire), and a great Rishi has offered sacrifice and poured oil upon the altar for the space of twelve years, so that my strength is gone and my colour has become yellow from drinking up the oil: I therefore desired to consume the great forest of Khándava, so that my strength and colour

Mythical ap-
pearance of the
god Agni (fire),
who desires to
devour the fo-
rest.

¹ The myth of "The Burning of the Forest of Khándava" is not related in the Mahá Bhárata, until after the mythical exile of Arjuna, which will appear hereafter.

might return again to me; but whenever I began to devour the forest, Indra poured down abundance of rain and quenched the fire, for he is desirous of preserving the great serpents who are dwelling in that jungle: I therefore beseech you, O Krishna and Arjuna, to protect me against Indra." At these words Arjuna agreed to make war against Indra, if Agni would provide him with celestial weapons; and Agni then gave Arjuna the bow which is called Gándīva, together with two quivers, and a chariot having the monkey god for its standard. Then Arjuna and Krishna fought Indra, and Agni devoured the forest of Khándava; and all the serpents were devoured likewise, excepting their Raja Takshaka, who escaped from the burning.

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Opposition of
Indra as the ally
of the Nágas, or
serpents.

Arjuna and
Krishna fight
against Indra,
and Agni de-
vours the forest.

The meaning of this myth, as far as it bears upon the clearing of the forest, will now be obvious. A Scythic tribe of Nágas were located in the jungle of Khándava, and naturally objected to the conflagration, which was, however, ultimately carried out. The actual burning of the forest, and war against the Scythic Nágas, seem to have been famous in Kshatriya tradition; and hence the gods and Bráhmans, and especially Krishna, were associated with it. There is also a religious meaning in the myth which will be discussed hereafter.

Interpretation
of the myth; the
burning of the
forest opposed
by the Scythic
Nágas.

The migration of a branch of Kshatriya settlers from the banks of the Ganges to the banks of the Jumná is also interesting from another point of view. It seems to indicate that whilst one band of Aryan colonists moved towards the south-east along the valley of the Ganges, another band moved in the same direction along the valley of the Jumná. Again, the site of Indra-prastha is far more distinctly indicated than the site of Hastinápur. The pilgrim who wends his way from the modern city of Delhi to pay a visit to the strange relics of the ancient

Progress of two
bands of Aryans
towards the
south-east, one
along the valley
of the Ganges,
and the other
along the valley
of the Jumná.

Remains of the
ancient city of
Indra-prastha
between Delhi
and the Kútub.

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world which surround the mysterious Kútub, will find on either side of his road a number of desolate heaps, the *débris* of thousands of years, the remains of successive capitals which date back to the very dawn of history; and local tradition still points to these sepulchres of departed ages as the sole remains of the Raj of the sons of Pándu, and their once famous city of Indra-prastha.²

The next point in the tradition which calls for observation, is the strange domestic life which accompanied the institution of polyandry. The tradition needs no introduction, but may be briefly related here:—

Legend of the
five houses of the
Pándavas.

Matrimonial
law.

Now as the five Pándavas were husbands of one wife, each of the brethren had a house and garden of his own, and Draupadí dwelt with each of them in turn for two days at a time; and it was a law amongst them, that if a brother entered the house of another brother, whilst Draupadí was dwelling there, he should depart out of the city and go into exile for twelve years. Now it so happened that all the weapons belonging to the brethren were kept in the house of Yudhishtira; and it came to pass that one night whilst Draupadí was dwelling with Yudhishtira, a Bráhman came with a loud outcry to the gate of Arjuna, and prayed for vengeance against a band of robbers who had carried away his cows. And the Bráhman was very clamorous, and Arjuna himself was very desirous to pursue the robbers. So Arjuna entered the house of Yudhishtira, and girded on his own coat of mail, and tied on his sword and buckler, and took his bow and arrows in his hand; and he overtook the robbers and slew some of them, and the remainder fled and left the

Alleged breach
of the law by
Arjuna.

² The whole of this neighbourhood is rich in historic association; and the journey from Delhi to the Kútub, and from the Kútub to Toglukabad, is perhaps one of the most interesting in India. At Toglukabad is the first great outpost of the Mussulman Afghans. The Kútub is a pillar of Islam victory erected amidst the remains of what was once a famous Buddhist city. Modern Delhi, again, was the great metropolis of the Mogul emperors.

cattle behind them. And Arjuna brought away the cattle and delivered them up to the Bráhmaṇ; and in the morning he went to Yudhishthira and told him all that he had done; and he requested permission to take his leave and go into exile for twelve years according to the rule. And Yudhishthira was much troubled, and said:—"You have done no harm, Arjuna, for I am your elder brother, and the same to you as a father: If indeed I had entered your house when Draupadī was there, then I should have been bound to go out of the city for twelve years; but when you entered my house, it was to you as the dwelling of your father; and I pray you therefore to think no more of the matter." But Arjuna replied:—"When we pledged ourselves by oath to this rule, nothing was said about the house of the elder brother being as the house of a father, and I am bound to depart out of the city." And Arjuna took his leave of his mother and brethren, and of his wife Draupadī, and set his face towards the jungle.

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Arjuna accepts
the penalty of
twelve years' ex-
ile.

Jocund re-
monstrances of
Yudhishthira.

Arjuna goes into
exile.

The question of how far the matrimonial law above indicated is historically true, can scarcely be discussed with minuteness by the modern historian. There is, however, sufficient evidence to excite the suspicion that it is purely mythical, and that it has been introduced for the sole purpose of toning down the more offensive features of the marriage. It is said to have originated with a famous Bráhmaṇ sage named Nárada, who abruptly introduced himself to the five brethren for the purpose of laying down the rule.³ The point, however, which is really deserving of notice, is the obligation which each of the brothers imposed upon himself, of going into

Dubious authen-
ticity of the ma-
trimonial law.

³ The story of the intervention of Nárada is amusing enough, but scarcely fitted for European eyes. He is said to have been received with every mark of honour and reverence, by Draupadī as well as by her husbands; but the sage had the delicacy to signal to Draupadī to leave the room, whilst he discussed with her husbands the propriety of their accepting the arrangement which he proposed.

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Proofs that the
matrimonial law
is a myth.

exile for twelve years in the event of any breach of the rule. Abundant evidence can be furnished that the exile is a myth. It is improbable that all the weapons should have been kept in the house of Yudhishtira whilst the matrimonial law was in force. It is improbable that Arjuna should have gone out single-handed against a band of robbers. The sophistry which Yudhishtira employs to persuade his brother to ignore the law is foreign to the character of the speaker, and is probably the interpolation of some jesuitical Bráhmaṇ. The period of twelve years is an obvious exaggeration. Moreover, it will presently be seen that the whole narrative of Arjuna's exile is crowded with details which are either supernatural, or Brahmanical, or an outrage upon geographical knowledge. The reason for the myth is, however, sufficiently obvious. Since Ná-rada the sage is said to have laid down the rule, it became necessary to show that the rule was faithfully observed, and this observance could only be indicated by an alleged breach of the rule.

Arjuna's exile;
its mythical cha-
racter.

Pilgrimages to
sacred Brah-
manical places
accompanied by
a crowd of Bráh-
mans.

Amours in the
remotest quar-
ters of India.

The narrative of the adventures of Arjuna during his twelve years of exile is evidently the work of one of the later Brahmanical "arrangers." It consists of pilgrimages to the most holy Brahmanical localities, accompanied by a crowd of Brahmanical sages, who are palpably supernumeraries. It also includes three different amours in the three most remote quarters of India, namely, Hurdwar, in the extreme north; Munnipúr, in the extreme east beyond the Bengal frontier; and Dwáraká, in the extreme west, at the furthest end of the peninsula of Guzerat. Moreover, whilst the Brahmanical compilers have industriously filled up the time as regards

Arjuna, they have neglected to record a single fact as regards his wife and four brethren; and the state of affairs at the end of the twelve long years is precisely the same as at the commencement of the exile. This mythical character will be rendered still more evident by a brief relation of the adventures which are said to have befallen Arjuna during his absence from Indra-prastha. For the convenience of comment the narrative of the exile may be divided into two portions; the first comprising the adventures prior to Arjuna's visit to Krishna, and the second embracing the legend of Arjuna's marriage to Krishna's sister. The first portion of the legend is as follows:—

Now many Bráhmans went with Arjuna, and he made pilgrimages to all the holy places, and he went to Hurdwar on the river Ganges, and bathed there; and a damsel named Ulúpi, the daughter of Vásuki, the Raja of the Nágas, was likewise bathing there, and she saw Arjuna and besought him to espouse her, and he abode with her many days. After this Arjuna went into the countries of the south, and proceeded to the Mahendra mountain, and received many praises from Parasu Ráma, who dwelt there; and Parasu Ráma gave Arjuna many powerful weapons, and taught him many wondrous things in the use of arms.⁴

Legend of Arjuna's adventures during his exile.

Amour with Ulúpi.

Visit to Parasu Ráma.

And Arjuna passed through many cities and peoples, until he came to the city of Manipura, and there the daughter of the Raja, whose name was Chitrángada, chanced to see him, and desired him for her husband. So she contrived that he should see her, for she was exceedingly beautiful; and when Arjuna saw Chitrángada he loved her likewise, and made himself known to the Raja of Manipura,

Marries the daughter of the Raja of Manipura.

⁴ Mahendra is the chain of hills that extends along the eastern or Coromandel coast of India from Orissa and the Northern Circars to Gondwana; part of this chain near Ganjam is still called Mahindra Malei, or the hills of Mahindra. (See Wilson's note to Vishnu Purána, p. 174.) Parasu Ráma was peculiarly a hero of the Bráhmans, and the myths respecting him will be found in another place.

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and demanded his daughter in marriage. The Raja replied:—"Chitrángada is my only child, and the great god Siva has ordained that neither I, nor the Rajas of Manipura who were before me, nor those who will come after me, shall have more than one child, be it a lad or a damsel: If therefore I give you my daughter in marriage, you must give to me any son that she may bear to you, that he may succeed in the Raj." So Arjuna pledged his word to the Raja and married Chitrángada, and she gave birth to a son who was named Babhru-váhana; and Arjuna dwelt at Manipura for three years.

Proceeds to
Prabhása, near
Dwáraká.

After this Arjuna took leave of his wife and son and departed out of Manipura, and travelled through many regions until he came to the holy place named Prabhása, which is nigh unto Dwáraká, where he met Krishna, and the other Chieftains of the Yádava tribe, who were reigning there.

Story of the
past of Arjuna
and his ancestors.

Conversion of
Arjuna into a
Bráhmaṇ hero.

The foregoing legend of the exile of Arjuna comprises a few significant incidents, which demand special consideration. The intimation that he was accompanied by many Bráhmans, and that he made pilgrimages to all the holy places, is apparently a general statement, having for its object the conversion of Arjuna into a Bráhmaṇ hero, piously attentive to all Brahmanical observances and ordinances. But the stories of his amours were introduced for a different purpose, though still having the same ultimate object in view. They have been apparently incorporated with the Mahá Bhárata, for the purpose of representing Arjuna as the ancestor of certain Rajas of a powerful Scythian race, known as the Nágas, whose history is deeply interwoven with that of the Hindús. These Scythic Nágas worshipped the serpent as a national deity, and adopted it as a national emblem, and from these circumstances they appear to have derived the name of Nágas, or

Amours of Arjuna introduced to represent him as the ancestor of the Nágas, Rajas.

Prominent part taken by the Scythic Nágas in the history of ancient India.

serpents. The seats of these Nágas were not confined to India, for they have left traces of their belief in almost every religious system, as well as in almost every country in the ancient world. They appear to have entered India at some remote period, and to have pushed their way towards the east and south; but whether they preceded the Aryans, or whether they followed the Aryans, is a point which has not yet been decided. In process of time these Nágas became identified with serpents, and the result has been a strange confusion in the ancient myths between serpents and human beings; between the deity and emblem of the Nágas and the Nágas themselves.⁵

Confusion between the Nágas as serpents, and the Nágas as Scythians.

The great historic fact in connection with the Nágas, which stands prominently forward in Hindú myths, is the fierce persecution which they suffered at the hands of the Bráhmans. The destruction of serpents at the burning of the forest of Khándava, the terrible sacrifice of serpents which forms one of the opening scenes in the Mahá Bhárata, and the supernatural exploits of the youthful Krishna against the serpents sent to destroy him, are all expressions of Brahmanical hatred towards the Nágas. Ultimately this antagonism merged into that deadly con-

Ancient conflict between the Bráhmans and the Nágas merged in the later religious wars between the Bráhmans and the Buddhists.

⁵ See some interesting notices of the Nágas in Elliot's *Supplementary Glossary*, art. *Gourtiaga*. Sir H. M. Elliot observes that the Nágas extended their usurpations to the Magadjiá empire of Bahar, the throne of which was held by the Nág or serpent dynasty for ten generations. A branch of them, the Nagbunsee chieftains of Ramgurh Sirgooja, have the lunettes of their serpent ancestor engraved on their signets in proof of their lineage; while the capital and district of Nagpore are called after their name.

It may be added that the whole of the Scythian race are mythically descended from a being half woman and half serpent, who bore three sons to Heracles (Herod. iv. 9, 10). It was no doubt from this creation that Milton borrowed his conception of sin. The serpents that are said to have invaded the kingdom of Lydians just before the downfall of Cræsus, were probably nothing more than Scythian Nágas (Herod. i.).

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hása, a famous locality in the neighbourhood of Dwáraká, when he met with the adventures which are described in the following legend:—

Krishna receives Arjuna with great rejoicings at Dwáraká.

Great feast on the Raivataka mountain.

Krishna and Arjuna fall in with the assembly of ladies.

Arjuna smitten with Subhadrá.

Krishna promises to give Subhadrá in marriage to Arjuna.

Now when Krishna heard of the approach of his kinsman Arjuna, he went out to meet him, and conducted him with great respect to his own house, and gave orders that the city of Dwáraká should be dressed out with flowers and banners and every sign of rejoicing; and he entertained Arjuna many days, and took him out every day to hunt or to ride. And it came to pass that after a while Krishna held a great assembly on a beautiful mountain named Raivataka, which is nigh unto the city of Dwáraká; and he gave a great feast there to all the Chieftains and their ladies, but the ladies were entertained in a separate pavilion by themselves. On the first day of the feast, Krishna took Arjuna by the hand and led him over the mountain, and as they were walking together they came near to the assembly of ladies; and when the ladies saw Krishna they came up and spoke to him, and amongst them was Subhadrá, who was Krishna's sister. And Arjuna saw Subhadrá, and he was stricken with her great beauty and exceeding elegance, and he interchanged glances with her. And Krishna saw that he was stricken, and said:—"How can you, who wander in the habit of a pilgrim, cast your eyes upon the ladies, and so lose your heart?" Arjuna replied:—"When a beautiful figure strikes the eye it will captivate the heart, and so it was unwittingly with me:" and with these words he turned away. Then Krishna took him by the hand, and said:—"This is my sister: If you wish to have her for your wife I will ask my father to give her to you." Arjuna replied:—"What happiness can equal that of the man who has your sister for his wife?" Then Krishna said:—"My older brother Balaráma is desirous of giving this sister of mine to Duryodhana, but I will give her to you."

And the feast on the mountain lasted two days, and on the morning of the third day the Chieftains and the ladies prepared to return to Dwáraká. And Krishna took Arjuna

aside, and gave him his own chariot, and four horses as swift as the wind, and said to him:—"I present you with this sister of mine for your wife, with the entire consent of my father Vasudeva: Ascend the chariot and overtake my sister who is already on the road to Dwáraká, and mount her upon the chariot likewise, and drive away with all speed to your own country, that you may be at Indra-prastha before the news reaches the ears of my brother Balaráma." So Arjuna followed the counsel of Krishna, and he ascended the chariot, and proceeded along the road to Dwáraká until he overtook Subhadrá, who was riding in a chariot together with some other ladies; and he drove slowly along by the side on which Subhadrá was until he came close to her, and then leaping down he took hold of her hand, and lifted her out of her chariot into his own, and drove off with all speed along the road to Indra-prastha.

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Krishna suggests to Arjuna that he should elope with Subhadrá.

Arjuna lifts Subhadrá into his chariot, and drives away towards Indra-prastha.

Then the people who saw what Arjuna had done, set up a loud cry; and some of them hastened to Dwáraká, and entered the place of Council where Krishna and Balaráma, and their father Vasudeva, and the other Chieftains were sitting together, and told how Arjuna had carried away the daughter of Vasudeva. And Balaráma was exceedingly wroth, and he ordered his servants to mount their horses, and set out to pursue Arjuna; but seeing that Krishna showed no concern, he said to him:—"As you are not affected at hearing that Arjuna has carried away Subhadrá, it must have been done with your consent: But it was not lawful for you to give away our sister without speaking a word to me; and Arjuna carries his death with him, for I will surely follow him, and slay him, and all his kindred." Krishna replied:—"Why, my brother, make all this stir? Arjuna is a kinsman of ours, and his family is of the noblest, and endowed with every estimable quality: What disgrace then can it be to us that Arjuna should have our sister for his wife? Whereas, if you go and bring her back, who else will espouse her after she has been in the house of another man? So in this case, therefore, it is well to show no concern, and to send messengers to Arjuna and bid him

News carried to Dwáraká.

Wrath of Balaráma.

Remonstrances of Krishna.

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Marriage of Ar-
juna and Su-
bhadrá.

Arjuna returns
to Indra-prastha
with his wife
Subhadrá.

Meeting be-
tween Arjuna
and Draupadí.

Draupadí recon-
ciled to Subha-
drá.

return to this city, that he may be married to our sister according to the ordinance." And Balaráma said:—"Since you are so well satisfied with this matter, you may do as it pleases you." So Krishna sent messengers to bring back Arjuna, and Arjuna returned to Dwáraká; and Krishna held a great marriage feast, and gave his sister to Arjuna according to the established rites, and Arjuna abode at Dwáraká many months.

After this, when the twelve years of exile were accomplished, Arjuna took leave of his new kinsmen, and departed with his wife Subhadrá for the city of Indra-prastha. And Raja Yudhishtira rejoiced to see him, and each of his brethren in turn gave him a feast which lasted many days. And Arjuna went to the apartment of Draupadí; but she was jealous, and looked coldly upon him, and said:—"What have you to do with me? Where is the daughter of Vasudeva?" But Arjuna replied with soothing words, and he caressed her, and after a while she became reconciled to him as before. Then Arjuna went out and brought Subhadrá to his mother Kuntí, and Subhadrá fell at the feet of her mother-in-law: and Kuntí lifted her up, and kissed her very affectionately, and gave her many blessings. Subhadrá then approached Draupadí, and bowed herself, and said:—"I am thy servant!" And Draupadí bowed in like manner, and embraced her, and said:—"May your husband be without enemies!" Then Subhadrá was filled with joy, and said:—"May it be so!" And henceforth there was amity between Draupadí and Subhadrá; and Draupadí gave birth to five sons, one to each of her husbands; but Subhadrá had one son only, whose name was Abhimanyu.

Legend of Ar-
juna's marriage
with Subhadrá
proved to be a
mere fiction.

The foregoing legend is undoubtedly a pleasing story, and real genius is displayed in describing the meeting of Arjuna and Draupadí, and that of Subhadrá and Draupadí, under such peculiar circumstances as those involved in the institution of polyandry. But the vast distance from Dwáraká to Indra-prastha excites the suspicion that the romance

is a pure fiction, belonging to the series of myths which have been interwoven with the main tradition for the sake of associating Krishna with the Pándavas. This suspicion is confirmed by a tradition, too deeply rooted for Brahmanical interpolations to explain away, which not only renders the alliance incredible, but fully indicates the reason for its introduction in the Mahá Bhárata. The identification of Krishna with Jagannáth, which will be discussed in another place, lays bare the truth. In the festivals of that god the three images of Krishna, his brother Balaráma; and his sister Subhadrá, are brought prominently forward; and the populace do not fail to heap reproaches upon Krishna, and upon his sister likewise, for having indulged in a criminal intimacy. It is, therefore, impossible to avoid the conclusion that the story of Arjuna's marriage is a myth, intended to cover the older tradition, which casts so foul a blot upon the memory of the favourite hero.⁹

Myth introduced to cover the tradition of Krishna's criminal intimacy with his sister.

The general history of the Kauravas and Pándavas during the alleged period of Arjuna's exile is altogether a blank; a significant silence which alone is sufficient to indicate that the interval of twelve years is purely mythical, and that there are few or no breaks between the foundation of Indra-prastha, the burning of the forest of Khándava, and the event which will form the subject of the next chapter.

Period of Arjuna's exile a blank in the general history of the Kauravas and Pándavas.

⁹ In the older tradition, Subhadrá is said to have lived in criminal intimacy with both her brothers. This tradition is universally known and believed by the people in spite of the story of the marriage of Subhadrá; and the Mussulmans frequently taunt the Hindús with the fact. The Pundits reconcile the stories by a fiction of there having been two Subhadrás. As to Krishna's proceedings, they are explained away as *máyá*, or delusion. *Máyá* is a most important idea in the Hindú system of theology, and will be discussed in a future volume under the head of religion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAJASÚYA, OR ROYAL SACRIFICE, OF YUDHISHTHIRA.

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Flourishing condition of the Raj of the Pándavas.

WHEN the Pándavas had established themselves in the city of Indra-prastha, their Raj flourished exceedingly; and the following poetical picture of a prosperous Raj, which has been taken from the Mahá Bhárata, may be accepted as an ideal description belonging to an age when the Bráhmans exercised a real supremacy, not only over the people but over the Rajas themselves:—

ahmanical
al of the pa-
rual rule of
udhishthira.

Tranquillity of
the Raj enabled
the subjects to
perform all re-
ligious duties.
General prosper-
ity insured by
the virtues of
the Raja.

Piety of the peo-
ple preserved
them from all
calamity.

Yudhishthira
respected by all
the neighbour-
ing Rajas.

Now Raja Yudhishthira ruled his Raj with great justice, protecting his subjects as he would his own sons, and subduing all his enemies round about, so that every man was without fear of war or disturbance, and gave his whole mind to the performance of every religious duty. And the Raja had plenty of rain at the proper season, and all his subjects became rich; and the virtues of the Raja were to be seen in the great increase of trade and merchandise, in the abundant harvests, and the prolific cattle. Every subject of the Raja was pious; there were no liars, no thieves, and no swindlers; and there were no droughts, no floods, no locusts, no conflagrations, no foreign invaders, and no parrots to eat the grain. The neighbouring Rajas, despairing of conquering Raja Yudhishthira, were very desirous of securing his friendship. Meanwhile Raja Yudhishthira, though he would never acquire wealth by unfair means, yet prospered so exceedingly, that had he lavished his riches for a thousand years no diminution would ever have been perceived.

The Brahmanical tone of this mythical description of a Raj is strikingly illustrative of the change between the period of Kshatriya conquest and that of Brahmanical ascendancy. The stress laid upon the importance of peace to enable the people to perform their duties is peculiarly Brahmanical. The Kshatriyas were a military class who delighted in war; and the blessings of peace as enabling the people to perform their religious duties is scarcely likely to have found a place in their own traditions. On the other hand, the performance of a ceaseless round of religious duties, and the special observance of particular days, form the constant burden of Brahmanical teaching; and the whole spirit of the myth, the eulogies which are freely bestowed upon the piety of the Raja and his subjects, and the temporal prosperity which rewarded such piety, is precisely what might have been expected from a priest caste labouring to enforce the duties of religion amongst an agricultural population.

When Raja Yudhishthira had thus triumphed over all his enemies, he resolved on performing the great royal sacrifice known as the Rajasūya, at which he should be inaugurated as an independent and sovereign Raja. This famous sacrifice appears to have existed as an institution amongst the ancient Kshatriyas at a remote period antecedent to the rise of the Bráhmans as a sacred and exclusive caste; and undoubtedly during the ascendancy of the Kshatriyas it had a political as well as a religious significance, being an assertion of sovereignty and supremacy as well as a sacrifice to the gods. In its original form it seems to have been a great national feast; the prototype of the banquets which were held in olden

Raja Yudhishthira resolves to celebrate a Rajasūya, or royal sacrifice.

Political significance of the Rajasūya, as an assertion of sovereignty at a national banquet, combined with a religious significance as a sacrifice to the gods.

Conception of sacrifice amongst the Kshatriyas.

time in Westminster Hall at the coronation of the ancient kings of England; and which were attended by the feudal Barons of the realm who had already paid their homage and sworn fealty to the new sovereign. Still, like most ancient institutions, the banquet was invested with a religious meaning, and was regarded both as a coronation feast and as a sacrifice to the gods. Indeed, it seems to have been a ceremonial at once devotional and festive; in which animals were sacrificed and roasted, and duly offered with hymns and invocations to the deities of the Vedas, as well as served up at the national banquet to the kinsmen, neighbours, and tributary Chieftains.¹

¹ The mode by which the Brāhmanas arrogated to themselves the sole right of officiating at the great sacrifices, and even of partaking of the meat, is curiously indicated by the following myths, which have been preserved in the *Aitareya Brahmanam* (Book VII. c. 4, Haug's translation). It should be premised that sacrifice is personified; so, too, is divine knowledge as the *Brahma*, and sovereignty as the *Kshattrā*. The following texts are extracted verbatim:—

“After *Prajāpati* had created the sacrifice, the *Brahma* (divine knowledge) and the *Kshattrā* (sovereignty) were produced. After both two kinds of creatures sprang up, such ones as eat the sacrificial food, and such ones as do not eat it. All eaters of the sacrificial food followed the *Brahma*, the non-eaters followed the *Kshattrā*. Therefore, the Brāhmanas only are eaters of the sacrificial food, whilst the *Kshattrīyas*, *Vais'yas*, and *Shūdras* do not eat it.

“The sacrifice went away from both of them. The *Brahma* and *Kshattrā* followed it. The *Brahma* followed with all its implements, and the *Kshattrā* followed (also) with its implements. The implements of the *Brahma* are those required for performing a sacrifice. The implements of the *Kshattrā* are a horse, carriage, an armour, and a bow with arrow. The *Kshattrā*, not reaching the sacrifice, returned; for, frightened by the weapons of the *Kshattrā*, the sacrifice ran aside. The *Brahma* then followed the sacrifice, and reached it. Hemming thus the sacrifice in its further course the *Brahma* stood still; the sacrifice, reached and hemmed in its course, stood still also, and recognising in the hand of the *Brahma* its own implements, returned to the *Brahma*. The sacrifice having thus remained only in the *Brahma*, it is therefore only placed among the Brāhmanas (i. e. they alone are allowed to perform it).

“The *Kshattrā* then ran after this *Brahma*, and said to it, ‘Allow me to take possession of this sacrifice (which is placed in thee).’ The *Brahma* said, ‘Well, let it be so; lay down thy own weapons, assume, by means of the implements of the *Brahma* (the sacrificial implements) which constitute the *Brahma*, the form of the *Brahma*, and return to it!’ The *Kshattrā* obeyed, laid down its own weapons, assumed, by means of the implements of the *Brahma* which constitute the *Brahma*, its form, and returned to it. Therefore, even a *Kshattrīya*, when

Decline of the
political element
during the
Brahmanical
ascendancy.Change in the
religious senti-
ment. Simple
idea of propitiat-
ing the gods by
delicious food,
modified by the
complex idea
that the deity
was to be propi-
tiated by
blood, and that
animals were to
be slain as an
atonement for
sin.

During the subsequent period when the ascendancy of the Bráhmans began to assert itself side by side with the sovereignty of the Kshatriyas, the ceremonial of these sacrifices underwent a significant change. The simple offerings to the gods were no longer made by the patriarch of the family, or Chief-tain of the tribe, but by an exclusive sacerdotal class, claiming a divine origin, and invested with supernatural powers. The result was that the political purport of the festival appears in a great measure to have passed away, whilst even the religious ideas, which found expression in the original institution, lost all their natural and joyous character. The child-like idea of propitiating the gods with choice viands became more or less modified by the more gloomy, but, at the same time, more complex conception, that

he lays down his weapons and assumes the form of the Brahma by means of the sacrificial implements, returns to the sacrifice (he is allowed a share in it).'

"As regards the portion of sacrificial food which is to be eaten by the sacrificer, they ask, whether the Kshattriya should eat, or whether he should not eat it? They say, if he eat, then he commits a great sin, as having eaten sacrificial food although he is an *ekuláda* (one not permitted to eat). If he do not eat, then he cuts himself off from the sacrifice (with which he was connected). For the portion to be eaten by the sacrificer, is the sacrificer. This is to be made over to the Brahma priest. For the Brahma priest of the Kshattriya is in the place of (his) Purohita. The Purohita is the one-half of the Kshattriya; only through the intervention of another (the Brahma priest), the portion appears to be eaten by him, though he does not eat it with his own mouth. For the sacrifice is there where the Brahma (priest) is. The entire sacrifice is placed in the Brahma, and the sacrificer is in the sacrifice. They throw the sacrifice (in the shape of the portion which is to be eaten by the sacrificer) into the sacrifice (which has the form of the Brahma) just as they throw water into water, fire into fire, without making it overflow, nor causing any injury to the sacrificer. Therefore is this portion to be eaten by the sacrificer (if he be a Kshattriya) to be given up to the Brahma.

"Some sacrificial priests, however, sacrifice this portion to the fire, saying, 'I place thee in Prajāpat's world, which is called vibhan (shining everywhere), be joined to the sacrificer, Svāha!' But thus the sacrificial priest ought not to proceed. For the portion to be eaten by the sacrificer is the sacrificer himself. What priest, therefore, asserts this, burns the sacrificer in the fire. (If any one should observe a priest doing so) he ought to tell him, 'Thou hast singed the sacrificer in the fire. Agni will burn his breaths, and he will consequently die. Thus it always happens. Therefore, he should not think of doing so.'

blood must be shed to propitiate an offended deity, and to atone for any neglect in the fulfilment of superstitious duties, or for any breach of Brahmanical law. Accordingly, whilst the primitive ritual was still maintained, whilst the flesh meat, the simple cakes, the parched grain, the clarified butter, the milk, the curds, and the soma wine, were still offered to the genial gods of the Vedas, the animals were slaughtered at the stake in the hope of appeasing the wrath of some revengeful and exacting deity, or as a vicarious atonement for national transgression or individual sin.

Brahmanical
doctrines of
sacrifices, pen-
ances, and caste,
overthrown by
the reformation
of Buddha, 600
B.C. to 800 A.D.

But against these superstitious conceptions of a divine ruler delighting in blood there arose that mighty movement known as Buddhism. In the same reforming spirit, and about the same age of the world's history, in which Isaiah denounced the rites and observances of the Mosaic law, the mysterious Buddha arose to anathematize the animal sacrifices of the Bráhmans.² For a period of twelve centuries, namely, from the sixth century before the Christian era until the eighth century after it, Buddhism triumphed throughout Hindústan; trampling upon the whole ceremonial of Brahmanism, with all its sacrifices, penances, and castes; and setting forth

² Isaiah's denunciations of the Mosaic ritual are very strong. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom! Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations! Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them" (Isaiah i. 10-14). The story of Cain and Abel points to an opposite direction. The fruits of the earth were not accepted, but only the firstlings of the flock (Gen. iv. 2-4).

Brahmanical re-
vival 800 A.D.
et seq.Influence of
Buddhism
throughout the
modern age of
Brahmanical
revival.Animal sacri-
fices replaced
by the Homa
and Páyasa.Review of the
subject. Four
different con-
ceptions of sac-
rifice, viz.:(1.) The corona-
tion banquets of
the Kshatriyas(2.) The sacrifi-
cial sessions of
the Bráhmans.(3.) The flower
offerings of the
Buddhists.(4.) The offer-
ings of the

of the

ical

the paramount necessity for purity of mind and body, and a more elevated moral rule. Sacrifices of all kinds were especially excluded from the Buddhist ritual; and no corresponding rite was permitted beyond the offering of flowers to the Buddhas who had attained the perfection of being. At the expiration of that period, namely, about ten centuries ago, there arose that great Brahmanical reaction or revival, which has continued with but slight disturbance from either Islam or Christianity down to the present day. But the reforming spirit of Buddhism has never been wholly eradicated, and indeed has left a lasting impress upon the national ritual. The great sacrifices of antiquity have never been revived; and the sacrifice of goats has been restricted to the exceptional worship of Durgá, and chiefly confined to the province of Bengal. The Homa, or clarified butter, which is presented to the fire in sacrificial ladles, and the Páyasa or sacred food of rice and milk, which is cooked in the sacrificial kettles, form in the present day the main staple of the so-called offerings or sacrifices to the gods of India.

From the foregoing observations it will have been seen that, since the first institution of the Rajasúya, the national conception of sacrifice has undergone four modifications, corresponding to the four great periods of Hindú history, namely, the Kshatriya, the Brahmanical, the Buddhistic, and the Brahmanical revival. The great sacrifices or banquets of the Kshatriyas were modified by the Bráhmans into sacrificial sessions of a purely religious character, but were subsequently swept away by the formation of Buddha, which only permitted of the

offering of flowers. So complete and effectual was this reformation, that animal sacrifices found no place in the Brahmanical revival; and the offerings to the gods henceforth mainly consisted of Homa and Páyasa, the clarified butter and the sacred food.³ These data should be borne in mind whilst considering the description of the Rajasúya of Yudhishtira; inasmuch as the Mahá Bhárata appears to have assumed its present shape during the later period of Brahmanical revival; and consequently the description of the Rajasúya in the form in which it has been handed down by the Brahmanical compilers, bears traces of nearly all the ideas which prevailed throughout the widely different periods mapped out in the foregoing paragraphs. One exception, however, must be noticed, namely, that the fact of animal sacrifices in the Rajasúya of Yudhishtira has been apparently suppressed in the Mahá Bhárata, although it undoubtedly found a place in the early Brahmanic ritual.⁴ The result has been that the sacrifice is not represented as an atonement for sin. Even this exception, however, finds full expression in the Aswamédha, or horse sacrifice performed by Yudhishtira at the conclusion of the great war; as well

Absence of allusions to animal sacrifice in the description of the Rajasúya of Yudhishtira, although it formed a part of the ancient rite.

³ Whilst ghee or clarified butter formed the staple of the Homa, and rice and milk were the staple of the Páyasa, other materials of smaller importance were and are mingled with both, chiefly consisting of things produced from the cow. This part of the subject will be considered in connection with the worship of the cow.

⁴ That an animal was tied to a stake and sacrificed as a burnt-offering at the Rajasúya, is plainly set forth in the Aitareya Bráhmaṇam, which apparently contains the oldest form of purely Brahmanical ritual extant. Dr Haug has published the original text of this valuable Bráhmaṇa, with an English version attached; and it may be added that his work is of the highest authority, inasmuch as he practised all the ancient forms of sacrifice under the direction of one of the few Bráhmans who have preserved the sacrificial mysteries as they descended from the remotest times. See Dr Haug's preface to the Aitareya Bráhmaṇam.

as in the Aswamedha performed by Rāma after his war with Rāvana; all of which will fully appear in their proper place hereafter.

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The legend of the Rajasūya of Yudhishtira may be divided into four sections, namely:

Division of the
legend of the
Rajasūya into
four sections.

- 1st, The preliminary Conquests.
- 2nd, The Sacrifice and Banquet.
- 3rd, The Death of Sisupāla.
- 4th, The Jealousy of Duryodhana.

In taking into consideration the preliminary conquests of the Pāndavas, it will be necessary to bear in mind what appear to be the bare facts. The Rajasūya was a triumphant ceremony. The Pāndavas had gone out of Hastināpur with their mother, their joint wife, and their priest, and had settled in a new country. They had built the fort at Indra-prastha, cleared the jungle of Khāndava, and driven out the Seythian tribe known as the Nāgas. Finally, having founded a new Raj, and having sufficiently established a supremacy over every bordering enemy, and having thus proved to the satisfaction of their new subjects that they could protect cattle and harvests, they invited all their kinsmen and neighbours to a Rajasūya, and in the presence of all the people solemnly inaugurated their elder brother Yudhishtira as Raja of Khāndava-prastha.

(1.) Preliminary
conquests.

The very restricted area of conquest indicated in the foregoing incidents would be amply sufficient to warrant the performance of a Rajasūya. The ceremony certainly involved the idea of conquest over every enemy; but this idea would be sufficiently realized if a Raja had established himself in a Raj, and gained by his exploits the respect of all the Chieftains in the immediate neighbourhood.

Limited area of
conquest.

Idea of the Ra-
jasūya in its
original appli-
cation.

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Idea of the Ra-
jasúya extended
to universal con-
quest.

Wars of the
Pándavas.

Yudhishtira
determines on
performing a
Rajasúya.

Pays all the
debts of his sub-
jects.

Calls a Council.

Sends for Krish-
na and takes his
counsel.

Mythical con-
quest of Jará-
sandha, Raja of
Magadhá.

In a later age, however, when the memory of the actual facts had nearly passed away, and the dim traditions were remodelled by later bards of boundless imaginations but limited geographical knowledge, the idea of conquest extended indefinitely over the whole earth, and necessarily led to the introduction of a considerable amount of mythical matter in order to realize the marvellous idea of universal empire. How this was effected may be gathered from the following myth:—

Now when Arjuna had returned to his brethren at Indra-prastha, the Pándavas went out to war and conquered many Rajas, and Raja Yudhishtira determined to perform the great sacrifice which is called the Rajasúya. Having brought all his passions under the most perfect control, Raja Yudhishtira ordered every debt which any of his subjects owed to be paid out of the public treasury; but there were few debtors in that Raj, for all the people were ever engaged in virtuous and pious acts, and they rejoiced when they heard that the Raja was about to perform a Rajasúya. Then the Raja called together a Council of his brethren; and the Bráhmans, and his preceptor Dhaumya, and the sage Vyása were also present; and he told the Council what he intended to do, and they all consented and rejoiced exceedingly. But still Raja Yudhishtira was distrustful of himself, and he would not commence the sacrifice without taking the counsel of Krishna; and he sent messengers to Dwáraká to invite Krishna to come to Indra-prastha. And Krishna came to Indra-prastha, and said:—"There remains one Raja to be conquered before you can perform the Rajasúya sacrifice, and that is Jarásandha the Raja of Magadhá." And Krishna and Arjuna and Bhíma disguised themselves as Bráhmans, and journeyed to the city of Magadhá, and Bhíma challenged Jarásandha to single combat; and Jarásandha came out and fought against Bhíma, and after much fighting he was defeated and slain. Then the three returned to Indra-prastha, and Krishna advised Yudhishtira how the Raja-

súya should be performed. And Yudhishtthira commanded his four brethren to go and collect tribute for the performance of the sacrifice from all the Rajas in the world, as was necessary in a Rajasúya; and he sent Arjuna to the north, Bhíma to the east, Sahadeva to the south, and Nakula to the west, and they went abroad for a whole year.⁵

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Yudhishtthira commands his four brethren to collect tribute from the four quarters of the world.

Return of the four brethren.

When the year was fully over the four brethren returned to Indra-prastha, and all the friends of Yudhishtthira counselled him not to lose the opportunity of performing the Rajasúya. Krishna, who had returned to Dwáraká, came again to Indra-prastha with immense wealth and a large army; for as the walls protect the house so Krishna protected the Pándavas; and every man rejoiced to behold Krishna, as men rejoice to behold the rising sun. Then Raja Yudhishtthira again spoke to Krishna about the Rajasúya; and Krishna said:—"You are now a great Raja, and it is proper for you to perform the Rajasúya, and I shall rejoice to assist you, and will do whatever you command." Yudhishtthira replied:—"Your presence alone is a sufficient guarantee for the success of my Rajasúya."

Krishna again advises Yudhishtthira to celebrate the Rajasúya.

The whole of the foregoing narrative is evidently a myth of the Brahmanical compilers who sought to promulgate the worship of Krishna. The mythical wanderings of the four brothers to the four quarters of the earth, where they waged supernatural wars, and whence they brought away supernatural quantities of gifts and tribute, are wholly unworthy of notice.⁶ The mythical conquest of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá, calls, however, for some remark. In the traditional life of Krishna, that hero is represented as a cowherd of the Yádava tribe, who rebelled against the Raja of Mathura, and put him

Mythical character of the foregoing narrative.

Wars of the four brethren in the four quarters of the earth all mythical.

Conquest of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá, a myth appertaining to the life of Krishna.

⁵ The Brahmanical compilers seem to have considered that Yudhishtthira would be rather dull during the absence of his brothers. Accordingly, the mythical Vyása was introduced, who spent the entire year in imparting lessons of morality to Yudhishtthira.

⁶ The details may perhaps be found useful hereafter, as exhibiting the extent of geographical knowledge possessed by the Hindús in comparatively modern times.

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Assembling of
the Rajas to the
Rajasúya.

Now when all things had been made ready for the Rajasúya, all the Rajas came to the place of sacrifice, bringing much wealth with them; and those who were friends to Raja Yudhishthira brought great presents, and those who had been conquered brought much tribute. And all the kinsmen of the Pándavas came in like manner to the Rajasúya. Duryodhana and all the Kauravas were there, together with the Mahárāja, and Bhíshma, and Drona, and Drupada, the father of Draupadí, and Sisupála, the Raja of Chedi, and Krishna, and his brother Balaráma, and his father Vasudeva. And all the Rajas of the Middle Country, and all the Rajas of the South Country, came in like manner to the Rajasúya; and altogether there were so many Rajas that their names cannot be recounted.

Rajas of the
Middle and
South Coun-
tries.

And every Raja had a lodging or pavilion of his own, in which provisions of every variety were served up in great abundance. And these pavilions were all very lofty, and of a pure white colour inlaid with gold; and round about each pavilion were very many beautiful trees, and round about the trees was a lofty wall covered with garlands of flowers. And the windows in those pavilions were made of golden network, and the doors to the rooms were made of solid gold, and the walls of the rooms were made of gold and silver. And all the rooms were laid with rich carpets, and decorated with furniture fitted for a Raja, and perfumed with sandal wood and incense. And the stairs leading to the upper rooms were so made, that no man found it difficult to go up or down. And the moment a man entered one of these rooms he was sure to be refreshed were he ever so weary. And the Rajas beheld the sacrifice while they were seated in those rooms.

Magnificent pa-
vilions appoint-
ed for the re-
ception of the
Rajas.

And Raja Yudhishthira commanded that all the Bráhmans and Kshatriyas, and all the respectable Vaisyas and Súdras, should be invited to attend the Rajasúya. And all the Rajas came and took up their abode in the pavilions; and all the Bráhmans who were to assist at the sacrifice came in like manner, and were entertained as splendidly as the Rajas. And all the four castes came as they had been invited. And the whole city of Indra-prastha resounded

Assembling of
all the four
castes.

HISTORY OF with the chanting of Vedic hymns, and "Take and eat" were the only words that could be heard.

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Place of sacrificial.

Meanwhile the place of sacrifice was made ready, and it was surrounded on all sides by the pavilions of the Rajas

and the Brahmins, and by very many storehouses and treasures; and it surpassed in richness and beauty every place of sacrifice which had ever been seen before. And

Yasa, the chief of the sacrifice.

the sage Vyasa was chief of the sacrifice, and appointed everything that was to be done; and he brought some very

Savarnan, the leader of the choir of Brahmins.

learned sages to attend the great ceremony. And Sasarnan

Dhananya and Yajna-walkya, who cooked the sacrifice, and offered it to the gods; and

their sons and pupils were the Brahmins, or assistant Hotris,

Choir of young Brahmins.

who chanted the mantras whilst the sacrifice was being

presented to the fire. Then Raja Yudhishtira, bowing

down to his uncle Dhritarashtra, asked the permission of

Bhisma, Drona, Duryodhana, and the rest, that he might

begin the ceremony, saying:—"You have full control over

my property and Raj, so do what is best for me: All of you

must assist me in this undertaking, and each one must

accept a separate charge." When Bhisma and Drona

directed the feast, and gave their counsel as to what was to

be done, and what was to be omitted. Duryodhana was

made the general superintendent in giving and receiving

resents. Duhshasana superintended the distribution of the

food; and Sahadeva took charge of all the choicer provisions; and two of the most faithful servants of Arjuna dis-

tributed the rice, the butter, the sugar, the milk, and the

sandal wood. Aswatthama, the son of Drona, and Sanjaya,

the minister and charioteer of Dhritarashtra, waited upon

the Brahmins; Kripa gave the gifts to the Brahmins; and

Krishna was appointed to wash the feet of the Brahmins;

and the gifts that were given to the Brahmins were beyond

all computation.

The extravagant exaggerations which appear in

the foregoing narrative are somewhat distracting,

but yet it may be possible to draw an approximate

Distribution of food and gifts.

The great feast.

Choir of young Brahmins.

Dhananya and Yajna-walkya, who cooked the sacrifice, and offered it to the gods; and

Savarnan, the leader of the choir of Brahmins.

Yasa, the chief of the sacrifice.

Place of sacrificial.

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Place of sacrificial.

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Place of sacrificial.

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picture of the events which actually transpired. The scene which probably presented itself to the eye at the Rajasúya, was a barbarous sacrifice followed by a rude feast in the open air. The ceremonies performed at the sacrifice are not clearly related in the Mahá Bháráta, but were probably in accordance with those which find expression in the Rig-Veda. A number of priests, either Bráhmans, or the predecessors of Bráhmans, marked out the spot for sacrifice, and strewed the place with the sacred kusa grass, and kindled the sacrificial fire, singing the old incantations which had been handed down to them by their fathers from times primeval. They next presented the Homa in sacrificial ladles, and poured it upon the flame with much chaunting of Vedic hymns, and performance of mystic rites; and doubtless they invoked Agni, the deity of fire, to lick up their simple oblations, and carry them in the ascending flame to the bright gods on high. Then animals may have been sacrificed, and their flesh cooked upon the fire, whilst vast quantities of other food were prepared, partly as offerings to the gods, and partly as provisions for the assembly. But before the worshippers sat down to the feast, the deities of the Vedas, with Indra at their head, would be invoked in passionate strains to descend from their resplendent abodes, and to come and sit down upon the sacred grass, and partake of the choice viands which had been prepared for their acceptance; and especially to drink up the milk, the curds, the ghee, the sugar, and the grateful and exhilarating juice of the soma.

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Probable picture of the real scene.
Probable character of the sacrificial rites.

The place of sacrifice strewed with Kusagrass.

The sacrificial fire.

Presentation of the Homa.

Invocations to Agni.

Nature of the sacrifices.

Invocations to Indra and all the gods to descend and partake of the offerings.

The so-called Rajas who really attended the Rajasúya were in all probability a rude company of

Probable character of the Rajas who were present at the Rajasúya.

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Topics of con-
versation.

half-naked warriors, who feasted boisterously beneath the shade of trees. Their conversation was very likely confined to their domestic relations, such as the state of their health, the condition of their families, the exploits of their sons, and the marriages of their daughters; or to their domestic circumstances, such as herds of cattle, harvests of grain, and feats of arms against robbers and wild beasts. Their highest ideas were probably simple conceptions of the gods who sent light, heat, and rain; who gave long life, abundance of children, prolific cattle, and brimming harvests, and who occasionally manifested their wrath in lightning and thunder, in devastating tempests and destroying floods. Such, in all probability, was the general character of the festive multitude who sat down upon the grass at the great feast to eat and drink vigorously to the honour and glory of the new Raja.

Reasons why the
authentic tradi-
tion is lost in
mythical exag-
gerations.

But the simple details of such a primitive gathering, grateful as they would have proved to a student of human nature, could scarcely have satisfied the aspirations of the later Brahmanical bards, or the pre-conceived ideas of the audiences before whom they recited the ancient story. The age when the Mahá Bhárata assumed its present form was a period of Brahmanical ascendancy. The divinity of the Bráhmaṇ casto was powerfully enforced and implicitly believed; and those ancient sages who had rendered themselves famous by their wisdom and fabled austerities, were revered as gods. At the same time the Courts of the Hindú Rajas who acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmanical hierarchy, were a blaze of Oriental splendour and luxury. The Rajas themselves never appeared before their subjects, unless arrayed in royal vest-

The Mahá Bhá-
rata composed
in an age of
Brahmanical
ascendancy.

Contemporary
splendour of the
courts of the
Rajas.

ments of cloth of gold and colours, adorned with a profusion of jewels, and surrounded on all sides by the glittering insignia of Hindú royalty. In other words, an age of ecclesiastical power and regal magnificence had succeeded to the simple patriarchal rule which prevailed in the Vedic period. Under such circumstances as these, the bards and eulogists, who chaunted the ancient story before the later Rajas, could scarcely have related the primitive details of olden time in which Princesses milked the cows, and Princes tilled the land. On the other hand, every exaggeration and embellishment which was introduced would add to the attraction of the legend, for they would redound to the greatness and grandeur of the Hindú heroes of olden time, the fathers of the very men who were drinking in the story. The temptations which led the Brahmanical compilers to exalt their ancient sages in the eyes of a later generation were even stronger; for the fabled respect paid to the sages by the ancient Rajas furnished bright examples for later Rajas to follow; and certainly the assertion that Krishna washed the feet of the Bráhmans is the highest glorification which could be conceived by the Hindús.

The early tradition remodelled to suit the tastes and ideas of a later period.

The Brahmanical compilers tempted by self-interest to exaggerate the respect paid to the ancient sages.

Significance of the assertion that Krishna washed the feet of the Bráhmans.

The death of Sisupála, which forms a third section of the legend of the Rajasúya, belongs to one of that series of traditions respecting Krishna which are so frequently found interlaced with the history of the Pándavas. The tradition is apparently authentic in itself, and only demands consideration because it seems to have been grafted on another authentic tradition with which it has no real connection. The story is as follows:—

(3.) The death of Sisupála an authentic tradition belonging to the Krishna group, but grafted on to the history of the Pándavas.

Legend of the presentation of the Argha to the greatest Chieftain present at a Rajasúya.

Now the custom was at the beginning of a Rajasúya to

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The Argha given
to Krishna.

Wrath of Sisupála.

General uproar.

Threat of Sisupála that he
would spoil the
sacrifice.

Sisupála be-
headed by the
chakra of
Krishna.

Rajasúya of
Yudhishthira
saved by
Krishna.

Point of the fore-
going legend;
the presentation
of the Argha to
Krishna.

declare who was the greatest and strongest of all the Rájās there assembled, in order that the Argha might be given to him; and Bhíshma, as ruler of the feast, declared that the honour was due to Krishna, who was the greatest and strongest of them all. But Sisupála, the Raja of Chedi, was exceedingly wroth with Krishna, for when he was betrothed to the beautiful Rukmini, Krishna had carried her away and made her his own wife. So Sisupála arose and threw the whole assembly into an uproar, and he said with a loud voice:—"If the honour be due to age, it should have been given to Vasudeva; if it be due to him who has the greatest Raj, it should have been given to Raja Drupada; if it be due to the youth of loftiest mind, it should have been given to Raja Duryodhana; if it be due to the greatest preceptor, it should have been given to Drona; and if it be due to the greatest saint, it should have been given to Vyása: But shame be upon this assembly, who hath given that honour to a cowherd, who was the murderer of his own Raja."

Having thus spoken, Sisupála and his friends who were with him made a great tumult. Yudhishthira and Bhíshma then reasoned with Sisupála, but he would not heed their words, and drew his sword, and threatened to slay all the guests and spoil the sacrifice. Yudhishthira and his brethren then rose to fight against Sisupála, but Bhíshma withheld them; and Sisupála in his rage abused Bhíshma and Krishna in such opprobrious terms that the whole assembly were alarmed. At last Krishna said:—"I have hitherto restrained my hand, because this man is my own kinsman, but I can bear with his words no longer." And thus speaking he whirled his chakra furiously at Sisupála, and severed his head from his body; and Sisupála fell dead upon the ground, and his sons carried away his body and burnt it upon the funeral pile. Thus Krishna saved the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira by the slaughter of Sisupála; for had Raja Yudhishthira been set at defiance by a Raja who had not been conquered, the Rajasúya would have been imperfect and of no avail.

The foregoing story turns upon the presentation

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PART II.Nature of the
Argha.Discrepancy be-
tween the legend
of the Argha
and the mythic
account of the
pavilions.Conformity of
the story to the
traditions refer-
ring to Krishna,
but not to the
traditions refer-
ring to the de-
scendants of
Bhārata.Presentation of
the Argha not
to be found in
the ancient ri-
tual of the Ra-
jasūya.The Argha at-
tributed to the
Buddhist
period.Reason why the
Yādava tradi-
tion of the death
of Si-supāla is
grafted on to the
Kshatriya tra-
dition.The legend, a
religious myth,
representing the
opposition of
Vishnu to Siva,
and enforcing
the worship of
Krishna as an
incarnation of
Vishnu.

of the Argha to the greatest Chieftain present at the Rajasūya; the Argha being a respectful gift, such as fruit and flowers, or milk and honey, which the Hindūs are still accustomed to offer to an idol, or to a Brāhman, or to a bridegroom on his wedding day. The legend is at variance with the mythic account of the pavilions from which the Rajas are said to have beheld the sacrifice; but this contradiction cannot be said to prove anything, as it is derived from a mythical source. A stronger suspicion arises from the fact that the story is perfectly in accordance with the traditionary accounts of the assemblies of the Yādavas, but has no parallel in the traditionary accounts of the councils of the Kshatriyas of the royal house of Bhārata, which indeed are generally characterized by an observance of order and law. Then again no trace of such custom, as that of presenting the Argha to the most distinguished Chieftain at such an assembly, appears in the ancient ritual of the Rajasūya, as preserved in the Aitareya Brahmanam. On the contrary, the Rajasūya was a ceremony expressive of the superiority of the Raja who performed the sacrifice; whilst the custom of offering the Argha as a token of respect or act of worship belonged to the Buddhist period, and was essentially a form of worship antagonistic to that of sacrifice. That Sisupāla was killed at some festival of the Yādavas is by no means unlikely, and more than one such tragedy will be noticed hereafter in the traditionary history of Krishna; and the only question that remains is the reason why the Brahmanical compilers grafted such a barbarous incident upon the traditions of the Kshatriyas.

The whole legend, however, as it appears in the

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Mahá Bhárata, is leavened with references to the divine nature of Krishna, as an incarnation of Vishnu; whilst Sisupála is said to have been born with three eyes, a fable which at once converts him into a representative or incarnation of Siva. For a long period the opposition of the worship of Vishnu to the worship of Siva desolated India with persecutions and civil wars; and the ancient legend has been converted into a myth to indicate both the opposition of the two deities, and the superior might of Vishnu. The Argha was a token of worship. By denouncing the presentation of the Argha to Krishna, Sisupála virtually denounced the worship of Vishnu; and his extraordinary death is thus treated as a manifestation of the divine wrath of Krishna, as an incarnation of Vishnu, of whom the chakra is a distinguished symbol.⁸

The chakra of Krishna an emblem of the wrath of Vishnu.

(4.) Jealous wrath of Duryodhana.

The jealous wrath of Duryodhana forms the conclusion of the story of the Rajasúya; but whilst the envy of the Kaurava Chieftain at beholding the success of his rival kinsmen is perfectly intelligible, his anger is said to have been excited by circumstances which can only be regarded as fictions of a later age. This conclusion will at once be obvious from the story, which is as follows:—

Duryodhana's surprise at the marvels at Indraprastha.

Mistakes a square of crystal for real water.

When the sacrifice had been fully accomplished, Duryodhana entered the place where it had been performed, and saw very many beautiful things that he had never beheld in his own Raj at Hastinápur. Amongst other wonders was a

⁸ The chakra, or sharp-edged quoit, was the peculiar weapon of Vishnu, and is invariably placed in one of his four hands. At a subsequent period the chakra was converted into the prayer-wheel of the Buddhists. The subject however belongs more directly to the history of the religion of the Hindús, under which head it will be considered in a future volume.

square made of black crystal, which appeared to the eye of Duryodhana to be clear water; and as he stood on the margin he began to draw up his garments lest they should be wetted, and then throwing them off he plunged in to bathe, and was struck violently on the head against the crystal. Then he was very much ashamed and left that place immediately; and coming to a lake of clear water, he thought it was black crystal and boldly walked into it, and would have been drowned had he not been dragged out by the servants of Raja Yudhishtira. Then the servants brought him new clothes, and he walked very warily; and the four brethren of Yudhishtira saw him, and began to laugh at his walking. Duryodhana was then very wroth, but he would not look at them, and he said nothing to them, and he sought to come away from that place; and it so happened that he tried to go out at a false door, and struck his head very violently in trying to pass quickly through it. After this he found his way out of the palace and returned to the city of Hastinapur, and told his father, the Mahárajá, all that had occurred.

Mistakes a lake of clear water for one of crystal.

Excites the mirth of the Pándavas.

Strikes his head against a false door.

It is somewhat singular that the foregoing story is not only a fiction of a later age, but seems to have been borrowed from the Mussulmans. A legend is preserved in the Koran that when the Queen of Sheba paid a visit to Solomon, she was conducted by the Hebrew King into a room floored with glass, upon which she thought that the glass was water and lifted up her robe.⁹ That the early colonists at Indra-prastha should have arrived at such a high pitch of art as the story would seem to imply ap-

The foregoing fiction borrowed from the Koran of the Mussulmans.

⁹ Koran, chap. xxvii. *Sale's translation.* According to Arab commentators the legs of the Queen of Sheba were covered with hair like those of an ass; and Solomon was anxious to prove the fact by ocular demonstration. Subsequently the Queen is said to have renounced idolatry, and to have professed Islam; and Solomon thought of marrying her, but would not do so until the hair had been removed. See *Sale's notes on the passage.*

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Possibility of
the legend ori-
ginating from
an independent
source.

pears wholly incredible; but that the unscrupulous compilers should have borrowed the idea from the early Mussulmans is by no means unlikely; although it is possible that the fable might naturally arise in the mind of any imaginative people on first beholding a commodity like glass, which bears so strong a resemblance to solid water.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAMBLING MATCH AT HASTINÁPUR.

THE celebration of the Rajasūya had raised the fortunes of the Pándavas to the height of human prosperity; and at this point the universal conception of an avenging Nemesis, that humbles the proud and casts down the mighty, finds full expression in the Hindú Epic. The grandeur of the Rajasūya, and the sovereignty which it involved, excited the jealousy of Duryodhana, and revived the old feud between the Kauravas and Pándavas. Duryodhana plotted with his brother Duhsāsana and his uncle Sákuni, how they might dispossess the Pándavas of their newly acquired territory; and at length they determined to invite their kinsmen to a gambling match, and seek by underhand means to deprive Yudhishtira of his Raj.

The specialities of Hindú gambling are worthy of some attention. The passion for play, which has ever been the vice of warriors in times of peace, becomes a madness amidst the lassitude of a tropical clime; and more than one Hindú legend has been preserved of Rajas playing together for days, until the wretched loser has been deprived of everything he possessed and reduced to the condition of an exile or a slave. But gambling amongst the Hindús does

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Hindu tradi-
tion of its dis-
astrous results.

Specialities of
Hindu dice-
skill as well as
chance brought
into play.

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Ancient game of
coupon with
cubic dice.

Modern game of
pasha with ob-
long dice.

not appear to have been altogether dependent upon chance. The ancient Hindú dice, known by the name of coupon, are almost precisely similar to the modern dice, being cubic balls thrown out of a box; but the practice of loading is plainly alluded to, and some skill seems to have been occasionally exercised in the rattling of the dice box. In the more modern game, known by the name of pasha, the dice are not cubic, but oblong; and they are thrown from the hand, either direct upon the ground, or against a post or board, which will break the fall, and render the result more a matter of chance. It would, however, appear from the Mahá Bhárata that Yudhishtira was invited to a game at coupon.

The legend of the great gambling match at Hastinápura may now be related as follows:—

Legendary ac-
count of the
gambling match
at Hastinápura.

Unscrupulous
kill of Sakuni,
the maternal
uncle of Dur-
yodhana.

And it came to pass that Duryodhana was very jealous of the Rajasúya that his cousin Yudhishtira had performed; and he desired in his heart to destroy the Pándavas and gain possession of their Raj. Now Sakuni was the brother of Gándhári, who was the mother of the Kauravas; and he was very skilful in throwing dice, and in playing with dice that were loaded; insomuch that whenever he played he always won the game. So Duryodhana plotted with his uncle, that Yudhishtira should be invited to a match at gambling, and that Sakuni should challenge him to a game, and win all his wealth and lands.

Duryodhana
prevails on the
Mahárajá to in-
vite the Pánd-
avas to a gam-
bling match.

After this the wicked Duryodhana proposed to his father, the Mahárajá, that they should have a great gambling match at Hastinápura, and that Yudhishtira and his brethren should be invited to the festival. And the Mahárajá was glad in his heart that his sons should be friendly with the sons of his deceased brother Pándu; and he sent his younger brother, Vidura, to the city of Indra-prastha to invite the Pándavas to the game. And Vidura went his way to the city of the Pándavas, and was received by them with every

Vidura carries
the invitation to
Indra-prastha.

sign of attention and respect. And Yudhishtira inquired whether his kinsfolk and friends at Hastinápur were all well in health, and Vidura replied, "They are all well." Then Vidura said to the Pándavas:—"Your uncle, the Mahárája, is about to give a great feast, and he has sent me to invite you and your mother, and your joint wife, to come to his city, and there will be a great match at dice-playing." When Yudhishtira heard these words, he was troubled in mind, for he knew that gaming was a frequent cause of strife, and that he was in no way skilful in throwing the dice; and he likewise knew that Sakuni was dwelling at Hastinápur, and that he was a famous gambler. But Yudhishtira remembered that the invitation of the Mahárája was equal to the command of a father, and that no true Kshatriya could refuse a challenge either to war or play. So Yudhishtira accepted the invitation, and gave commandment that on the appointed day, his brethren, and their mother, and their joint wife should accompany him to the city of Hastinápur.

When the day arrived for the departure of the Pándavas, they took their mother Kuntí, and their joint wife Draupadí, and journeyed from Indra-prastha to the city of Hastinápur. And when they entered the city they first paid a visit of respect to the Mahárája; and they found him sitting amongst his Chieftains; and the ancient Bhíshma, and the preceptor Drona, and Karna, who was the friend of Duryodhana, and many others were sitting there also. And when the Pándavas had done reverence to the Mahárája, and respectfully saluted all present, they paid a visit to their aunt Gándhári, and did her reverence likewise. And after they had done this, their mother and joint wife entered the presence of Gándhári, and respectfully saluted her; and the wives of the Kauravas came in and were made known to Kuntí and Draupadí. And the wives of the Kauravas were much surprised when they beheld the beauty and fine raiment of Draupadí; and they were very jealous of their kinswoman. And when all their visits had been paid, the Pándavas retired with their wife and mother to the quarters which had been prepared for them, and when it was evening they

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Stakes Draupadi.
Agitation of the
elder Chieftains,
and joy of the
Kauravas.

Yudhishtira
loses.
General con-
sternation.

Duryodhana
sends for Draupadi
to sweep
the rooms.

Vidura protests,
and urges that
Draupadi was
not lost, as Yudhishtira
was a
slave when he
staked her.

Duryodhana
sends his ser-
vant to bring
Draupadi to the
pavilion.

yourself, and becoming a slave : But now stake your wife Draupadī, and if you win the game you will again be free." And Yudhishtira answered and said :—" I will stake Draupadī ! " And all assembled were greatly troubled, and thought evil of Yudhishtira ; and his uncle Vidura put his hand to his head and fainted away, whilst Bhishma and Drona turned deadly pale, and many of the company were very sorrowful ; but Duryodhana and his brother Duhsāsana, and some others of the Kauravas, were glad in their hearts, and plainly manifested their joy. Then Sakuni threw the dice, and won Draupadī for Duryodhana.

Then all in that assembly were in great consternation, and the Chieftains gazed upon one another without speaking a word. And Duryodhana said to his uncle Vidura :—" Go now and bring Draupadī hither, and bid her sweep the rooms." But Vidura cried out against him with a loud voice, and said :—" What wickedness is this ? Will you order a woman who is of noble birth, and the wife of your own kinsman, to become a household slave ? How can you vex your brethren thus ? But Draupadī has not become your slave ; for Yudhishtira lost himself before he staked his wife, and having first become a slave, he could no longer have power to stake Draupadī." Vidura then turned to the assembly and said :—" Take no heed to the words of Duryodhana, for he has lost his senses this day." Duryodhana then said :—" A curse be upon this Vidura, who will do nothing that I desire him."

After this Duryodhana called one of his servants, and desired him to go to the lodgings of the Pándavas, and bring Draupadī into the pavilion. And the man departed out, and went to the lodgings of the Pándavas, and entered the presence of Draupadī, and said to her :—" Raja Yudhishtira has played you away, and you have become the slave of Raja Duryodhana : So come now and do your duty like his other slave girls." And Draupadī was astonished at these words, and exceedingly wroth, and she replied :—" Whose slave was I that I could be gambled away ? And who is such a senseless fool as to gamble away his own wife ? "

The servant said :—"Raja Yudhishtira has lost himself, and his four brothers, and you also, to Raja Duryodhana, and you cannot make any objection : Arise, therefore, and go to the house of the Raja !" Then Draupadī cried out :—"Go you now and inquire whether Raja Yudhishtira lost me first or himself first ; for if he played away himself first, he could not stake me." So the man returned to the assembly, and put the question to Yudhishtira ; but Yudhishtira hung down his head with shame, and answered not a word.

Draupadi refuses to go.

Then Duryodhana was filled with wrath, and he cried out to his servant :—"What waste of words is this ? Go you and bring Draupadī hither, that if she has aught to say, she may say it in the presence of us all." And the man essayed to go, but he beheld the wrathful countenance of Bhīma, and he was sore afraid, and he refused to go, and remained where he was. Then Duryodhana sent his brother Duhsāsana ; and Duhsāsana went his way to the lodgings of Draupadī and said :—"Raja Yudhishtira has lost you in play to Raja Duryodhana, and he has sent for you : So arise now, and wait upon him according to his commands ; and if you have anything to say, you can say it in the presence of the assembly." Draupadī replied :—"The death of the Kauravas is not far distant, since they can do such deeds as these." And she rose up in great trepidation and set out, but when she came near to the palace of the Mahārāja, she turned aside from the pavilion where the Chieftains were assembled, and ran away with all speed towards the apartments of the women. And Duhsāsana hastened after her, and seized her by her hair, which was very dark and long, and dragged her by main force into the pavilion before all the Chieftains. And she cried out :—"Take your hands from off me !" But Duhsāsana heeded not her words, and said :—"You are now a slave girl, and slave girls cannot complain of being touched by the hands of men."

Duryodhana sends his servant a second time.

The servant refuses to go. Duhsāsana goes to bring Draupadi.

Duhsāsana drags Draupadi into the pavilion by her hair.

When the Chieftains thus beheld Draupadī, they hung down their heads from shame ; and Draupadī called upon the elders amongst them, such as Bhīshma and Drona, to

The elder Chieftains paralyzed. Draupadi vainly appeals to Bhishma and Drona.

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The Pándavas
forbidden by
Yudhishtira to
interfere.

Duhsásana in-
sults Draupadī
before all the
assembly.

Draupadī's
solemn appeal
to the Chief-
priest.

His outrages
committed by
Duhsásana
and Duryod-
hana.

Bhīma's fearful
vow.

Sudden appear-
ance of the
Mahārāja in the
pavilion.

The Mahārāja
apologizes to
Draupadī, and
bids her return
with her hus-
band to Indra-
prastha.

acquaint her whether or no Raja Yudhishtira had gambled away himself before he had staked her; but they likewise held down their heads and answered not a word. Then she cast her eye upon the Pándavas, and her glance was like the stabbing of a thousand daggers, but they moved not hand or foot to help her; for when Bhīma would have stepped forward to deliver her from the hands of Duhsásana, Yudhishtira commanded him to forbear, and both he and the younger Pándavas were obliged to obey the commands of their elder brother. And when Duhsásana saw that Draupadī looked towards the Pándavas, he took her by the hand, and drew her another way, saying:—"Why, O slave, are you turning your eyes about you?" And when Karna and Sakuni heard Duhsásana calling her a slave, they cried out:—"Well said! well said!"

Then Draupadī wept very bitterly, and appealed to all the assembly, saying:—"All of you have wives and children of your own, and will you permit me to be treated thus? I ask you one question, and I pray you to answer it." Duhsásana then broke in and spoke foul language to her, and used her rudely, so that her veil came off in his hands. And Bhīma could restrain his wrath no longer, and spoke vehemently to Yudhishtira; and Arjuna reproved him for his anger against his elder brother, but Bhīma answered:—"I will thrust my hands into the fire before these wretches shall treat my wife in this manner before my eyes." Then Duryodhana said to Draupadī:—"Come now, I pray you, and sit upon my thigh!" And Bhīma gnashed his teeth, and cried out with a loud voice:—"Hear my vow this day! If for this deed I do not break the thigh of Duryodhana, and drink the blood of Duhsásana, I am not the son of Kuntī!"

Meanwhile the Chieftain Vidura had left the assembly, and told the blind Mahārāja Dhritarashtra all that had taken place that day; and the Mahārāja ordered his servants to lead him into the pavilion where all the Chieftains were gathered together. And all present were silent when they saw the Mahārāja, and the Mahārāja said to Draupadī:—"O daughter,

my sons have done evil to you this day: But go now, you and your husbands, to your own Raj, and remember not what has occurred, and let the memory of this day be blotted out for ever." So the Pándavas made haste with their wife Draupadí, and departed out of the city of Hastinápur.

Then Duryodhana was exceedingly wroth, and he said to his father:—"O Mahárāja, is it not a saying that when your enemy hath fallen down, he should be annihilated without a war? And now that we had thrown the Pándavas to the earth, and had taken possession of all their wealth, you have restored them all their strength, and permitted them to depart with anger in their hearts; and now they will prepare to make war that they may revenge themselves upon us for all that has been done, and they will return within a short while and slay us all: Give us leave then, I pray you, to play another game with these Pándavas, and let the side which loses go into exile for twelve years; for thus and thus only can a war be prevented between ourselves and the Pándavas." And the Mahárāja granted the request of his son, and messengers were sent to bring back the brethren; and the Pándavas obeyed the commands of their uncle, and returned to his presence; and it was agreed upon that Yudhishtira should play one game more with Sakuni, and that if Yudhishtira won, the Kauravas were to go into exile, and that if Sakuni won, the Pándavas were to go into exile; and the exile was to be for twelve years, and one year more; and during that thirteenth year those who were in exile were to dwell in any city they pleased, but to keep themselves so concealed that the others should never discover them; and if the others did discover them before the thirteenth year was over, then those who were in exile were to continue so for another thirteen years. So they sat down again to play, and Sakuni had a set of cheating dice as before, and with them he won the game.

Duryodhana
wrathfully re-
monstrates with
the Mahárāja.

Proposes the re-
call of the Pán-
davas, and set-
tlement of the
dispute by
another game.

Return of the
Pándavas.

The winners to
obtain the en-
tire Raj, and the
losers to go into
exile for twelve
years in a jungle
and one year in
a city.

Yudhishtira
loses the game.

When Duhsásana saw that Sakuni had won the game, he danced about for joy; and he cried out:—"Now is established the Raj of Duryodhana." But Bhíma said:—"Be not elated with joy, but remember my words: The day will come

Joy of Duhsá-
sana.

Wrath of Bhi-
ma.

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Kuntí remains
at Hastinápur.

Departure of
the Pándavas.

Draupadí's ter-
rible vow.

when I will drink your blood, or I am not the son of Kuntí." And the Pándavas, seeing that they had lost, threw off their garments and put on deer-skins, and prepared to depart into the forest with their wife and mother, and their priest Dhaumya; but Vidura said to Yudhishtira:—"Your mother is old and unfitted to travel, so leave her under my care;" and the Pándavas did so. And the brethren went out from the assembly hanging down their heads with shame, and covering their faces with their garments; but Bhíma throw out his long arms and looked at the Kauravas furiously, and Draupadí spread her long black hair over her face and wept bitterly. And Draupadí vowed a vow, saying:—"My hair shall remain dishevelled from this day, until Bhíma shall have slain Duhsásana and drunk his blood; and then he shall tie up my hair again whilst his hands are dripping with the blood of Duhsásana."

Affecting char-
acter of the fore-
going tradition
of the gambling
match.

Its truthfulness
to human
nature as mani-
fested by a
primitive but
high-spirited
race.

Wives not un-
frequently lost
and won at
Kshatriya
gambling
matches.

Draupadí evi-
dently familiar
with the idea.

The foregoing tradition of the gambling match at Hastinápur is not perhaps so horrible as the fictions of Bhíma's encounters with the Asuras, but it appeals far more strongly to the feelings; and but for the depraved element involved in the idea of polyandry, would form one of the most attractive legends in the Mahá Bhárata. Throughout the narrative there is a truthfulness to human nature, and a truthfulness to that particular phase of human nature, which is prominently manifested by a high-minded race in its primitive stage of civilization. The real interest of the story begins from the moment that Draupadí was lost. As regards the truth of this incident there can be little doubt. Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, where women were chiefly prized on sensual grounds, such stakes were evidently recognized. Draupadí herself, although shocked at the result, was by no means unfamiliar with the

idea." She protested, not on any ground of sentiment or matrimonial obligation, but solely on a technical point of law; and even after she had been dragged by the hair into the pavilion, and when she appealed to the Chieftains, in consideration of their own wives and children, to protect her from outrage, she still only asked for an answer to her question:—"Had Yudhishtira become a slave before he staked his wife upon the last game?" As to the treatment which she subsequently received, it was simply an assertion of the right of ownership which Duryodhana claimed over the wife of his kinsmen.³

The most sensational scene in the narrative is the sudden appearance of the blind Mahá-*rāja*, at the critical moment when Draupadī had received the worst affront, and Bhīma had uttered his terrible vow of revenge. It is easy to conceive that, but for this event, swords would have been drawn, and the gambling pavilion would have been a scene of blood-

Sensational character of the scene in which the blind Mahá-*rāja* suddenly appears in the pavilion.

² European traditions of gambling are by no means free from scandals of a similar character, although they were invariably regarded as secret. There is a horrible story of a gambler playing away his wife in Mr Ainsworth's romance of "Old St Paul's," which is apparently based upon some tradition of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century the ladies became gamblers, and not unfrequently paid their debts at the sacrifice of their honour. See Massey's *History of England*, Vol. II.

³ An extraordinary interpolation in this portion of the narrative is worthy of notice, inasmuch as it affords a striking illustration of the reckless spirit in which the Brahmanical "arrangers" grafted their absurd inventions upon the authentic legend. Duhsāsana is said to have tried to strip Draupadī in the presence of the assembly, but she prayed to Krishna, and the god miraculously interposed in her behalf, by so multiplying the number of her under garments, that as fast as Duhsāsana removed one, another appeared in its room. At a subsequent period in the poem, when Krishna was acting as a mortal hero, and a friend to the Pándavas, Draupadī took occasion to thank him for the services he had rendered her in clothing her at such a perilous time. The incident is rendered more curious by the circumstance that the early fame of Krishna rested upon an exploit of the very opposite character, namely, his having carried away the clothes of the daughters of the cowherds while they were bathing.

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shed. But in a moment all was hushed. The authority of the Mahárajá was paramount, and no one attempted to interpose when the Pándavas left the place at his command. But when they had fairly departed for their own city, Duryodhana remonstrated with his father warmly and effectually; and the arguments which he urged are precisely those which would be urged in the present day by a Rájput Chieftain. The Pándavas had received such an affront that it was impossible they should either forgive or forget. They would be dishonoured for ever if they did not wipe out the insult with blood; and their revenge might prove fatal to the whole house of Bhárata. There was no other way by which a deadly feud could be prevented than by one party or the other going into exile, whilst the other remained in possession of the entire Raj.

Unpardonable nature of the affront which had been put upon the Pándavas.

Impressive picture of the departure of the Pándavas and Draupadi on their exile.

The concluding scene always forms an impressive picture in the mind of the Hindú. All is lost, and the Pándavas are doomed to years of exile. Duh-sásana is dancing with joy at the thought that the final game was won, whilst Bhíma is vowing to drink his blood. Yudhishtira and his four younger brothers are leaving the assembly, covering their faces with shame, whilst Bhíma is throwing out his long arms as expressive of his rage. But the terrible figure of Draupadí, as she dishevels her long black hair, is the very impersonation of revenge; and a Hindú audience never fails to shudder at her fearful vow, that the straggling tresses shall never again be tied up until the day when Bhíma shall have fulfilled his vow, and shall then bind them up whilst his fingers are still dripping with the blood of Duhsásana.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECOND EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS—THE TWELVE YEARS IN THE JUNGLE.

THE tradition of the second exile of the Pándavas is naturally separated into two portions, namely:—

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1st, The wanderings in the jungle during twelve years.

Tradition of the twelve years of jungle life, to be distinguished from the fiction of the thirteenth year of city life.

2nd, The concealment in a city during the thirteenth year.

These two narratives are widely distinct in their origin and character. The story of the twelve years' wanderings in the jungle comprises some incidents which are based upon authentic tradition; but the legend of the concealment in a city during the thirteenth year, so far as the Pándavas are concerned, is a palpable fiction. These points will be fully proved and elucidated hereafter; but for the present it will be convenient to bear in mind the broad distinction.

Besides this distinction, it should also be noticed that there are certain indications in the story of the twelve years' wanderings which lead directly to the inference that the period of exile was not twelve years but twelve months. The incidents of jungle life which can be referred to the authentic tradition are but few in number, and might easily have

Theory that the twelve years of exile were originally twelve months, and that the thirteenth year was an intercalary month introduced to complete the solar year.

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occurred within the space of a single year. On the other hand, the story is very largely interpolated with mythical details and legends, which are so wildly supernatural in their character, that they may be safely treated as later interpolations. Accordingly, it follows that either the term of twelve years has been adopted for the purpose of affording sufficient time for the transactions to have taken place which are recorded in the myths; or that the myths have been introduced for the purpose of filling up the more lengthened period of exile. The hypothesis that the narrative of the thirteenth year is a later fiction confirms this view. The exile for twelve lunar months would not be equal to a solar year; and, therefore, it seems likely that this fiction of a thirteenth year originated in the idea that thirteen lunar months were necessary to the completion of a solar year.

Legend of the twelve years' exile, partly mythic and partly authentic.

The details of the legend of the twelve years' exile are thus divisible into two classes, viz.—

1st, The Mythic.

2nd, The Authentic.

But before attempting to carry out this division, it may be as well to glance at the general character of the legend; and this may, perhaps, be best gathered from the following narrative:—

Legendary sketch of the life of the Pándavas in the jungle.

Pilgrimages to holy places.

Instructions of Bráhmaṇas and sages.

And it came to pass that the Pándavas, with their wife Draupadī, and their priest Dhaumya, wandered in the jungle for twelve years, and they fed on such game as the brethren shot on their way. And they made many pilgrimages to holy places, and fasted, and bathed, and performed religious worship; and they met with many holy Bráhmaṇas and sages who instructed them in pious acts, and beguiled them with stories of ancient times, and

promised them that the day should come when they should be restored to the Raj. Sometimes they came to verdant places covered with flowers, where the trees were loaded with fruits, and many curious animals presented themselves; but at other times violent winds arose and blackened the sky with dust, and laid prostrate the largest trees, and then the rain would fall heavily, and the torrents would pour down from the mountains like rivers, and the roads would become so wretched that all the Pándavas, excepting Bhíma, would be unable to move, and the weary Draupadí would faint away; but then the giant Bhíma would carry his fatigued brethren and his afflicted wife upon his back and shoulders, and under his arms, and walk on as before.

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Changes in
jungle scenery.
Occasional tem-
pests.

The general character of the mythical portions of the legend of the exile is indicated in the foregoing paragraph; but in the present instance some more particular description is necessary, as the myths occupy a very large space in the Mahá Bhárata, and are not wholly devoid of historical significance. It has already been seen that in addition to the Brahmanical bearing of the Mahá Bhárata, there is an underlying effort throughout the poem to ascribe a divine origin to the Pándavas, and to associate them with the gods of the Hindús. In the story of their birth it is plainly asserted that Pándu was not their real father, but that they were directly begotten by the gods; that Yudhishthira was the son of Dharma, that Bhíma was the son of Váyu, and that Arjuna was the son of Indra, whilst Nakula and Sahadeva were the sons of the two Aswins. Accordingly, in the legend of their twelve years' wanderings, a number of additional myths have been inserted to confirm this relationship and association. These myths furnish a striking illustration of the wide difference between the mental

1st, Mythical
portion of the
legend of the
twelve years' ex-
ile.

Description of
the subject
matter.

Introduced to
confirm the
myth that the
Pándavas were
the sons of the
ancient gods of
the Hindús.

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culture of the European and that of the Hindús. To the former they must appear childish and unmeaning, but to the latter they are highly attractive, for they serve to amuse the dreamy and indolent intellect of the Hindú, whilst gratifying his religious instinct with the idea that he is storing up in his memory a rich stock of pious legends and divine mysteries.

Samples of the
myths.

Dialogue between Yudhishtira and his mythical father Dharma, or personified goodness.

A few samples of these extraordinary myths may now be exhibited in a bare outline. On one occasion Yudhishtira was accosted by a divine being, who subsequently turned out to be his mythical father Dharma, or personified goodness. Dharma asked him a number of sphinx-like questions respecting human life and Bráhmánism, all of which were answered by Yudhishtira in a spirit of Brahmanical wisdom. Bhíma in his turn met with Hanuman, the monkey hero of the Rámáyana, who was mythically his own brother, as both were the sons of Váyu, or the wind. Bhíma, by virtue of his parentage, was proceeding along as swiftly as the wind; so that the earth trembled at his velocity, the largest trees were shaken to the ground, and one touch of his toe killed every lion, tiger, or wild elephant that sought to obstruct his passage. The attention of Hanuman was attracted by these marvels, and he obtained an interview with his mythical brother, by shrinking himself to the size of the smallest ape, whilst swelling out his tail to such an enormous bulk that it effectually stopped the progress of Bhíma. Hanuman then related to Bhíma the whole story of the Rámáyana, and swelled out his body until it was as lofty as the Vindhya mountain, and shone with a yellow radiance like that of

Interview between Bhíma and Hanuman, the monkey hero, who are both the mythical sons of Váyu or the wind.

Hanuman's supernatural shrinking and swelling.

molten gold. By Hanuman's aid Bhíma made his way to the gardens of Kuvera on the Himálaya mountain, and there he found flowers which had a thousand petals, and which had been eagerly desired by Draupadí because their smell was so delicious that it would make old people young again, and convert sorrow into joy.

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Bhima proceeds to the gardens of Kuvera, the god of wealth.

But of all the myths which have been introduced for the sake of associating the Pándavas with the gods, none are so famous as those which refer to Arjuna, the fabled son of Indra, who was himself the sovereign of the Vedic deities. Arjuna proceeded to the Himálaya mountains, by the advice of his mythical grandfather Vyása, for the sake of performing such penances as should propitiate the gods, and induce them to grant him celestial weapons which would ensure him the victory over Duryodhana and the Kauravas. On reaching the Mandara mountain he heard a voice in the sky calling upon him to stop; and Indra appeared in all his glory, and promised to give him the divine weapons provided he succeeded in propitiating the god Siva. Arjuna then entered upon a course of austerities so severe that Siva was perfectly gratified, but proved the valour of his worshipper by taking upon himself the form of a mountaineer and engaging Arjuna in single combat. Arjuna, unable to make any impression upon his enemy, at length discovered the deity, and prostrated himself at the feet of Siva; upon which Siva gave him one of his most powerful weapons. Subsequently the gods of the four quarters of the universe—Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Kuvera—presented themselves to Arjuna, and respectively furnished him with their own peculiar

Famous myths referring to Arjuna.

Arjuna practises austerities on the Himálaya mountains to induce the gods to grant him celestial weapons.

Indra refers him to Siva.

Arjuna propitiates Siva, who engages him in single combat.

Receives a weapon from Siva.

The gods of the four quarters of the universe present him with weapons.

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Practises the
use of arms in
the heaven of
Indra.

Mythic wars of
Arjuna against
the Daityas of
the sea.

weapons. Arjuna was then carried away in Indra's chariot to the city of Amarávati, which is the heaven of Indra. There he spent many years in practising the use of arms; and at length was sent by Indra to make war against the Daityas of the sea.

The mythic account of Arjuna's wars against the Daityas of the sea, is also worthy of notice if only as a creation of the imagination. On approaching the coast in a chariot which flew through the air, Arjuna beheld the sea rising in vast heaps, and saw ships laden with rubies, and fishes and tortoises as large as mountains. He blew his war shell and the Daityas trembled with fear, but in return they sounded their drums and trumpets so loudly that the monsters of the deep leaped above the waves. Thousands of Daityas rushed upon him, but he uttered powerful mantras as he discharged his arrows, and kept them all at bay. They rained fire, water, and mountains upon him, but he triumphed in the end and slew them all. Then the women came out screaming like cranes, but Arjuna passed them by and entered the city, where he saw chariots with ten thousand horses of the colour of peacocks. Meantime the women were terrified at the rolling of his chariot, and fled to their houses, whilst the noise of their ornaments resembled the falling of stones upon a mountain. After this victory Arjuna returned to Indra, and was rewarded with great praises; and the sovereign of the gods presented him with a chain of gold and a diadem, and with a war shell which sounded like thunder.

Chariot-horses
of the colour of
peacocks.

Historical signi-
ficance of the
foregoing
myths.

These extravagant myths, unmeaning as they appear in themselves, are not without historical significance, when considered in connection with the

age in which the Mahá Bhárata assumed its present form. It was an age of Brahmanical revival; an age when the Bráhmans appealed to the old national gods of the Hindús against the practical atheism of the Buddhists; an age when the national traditions were remodelled, and ancient forms of worship were restored, for the purpose of enlisting the sympathies of the masses against the Buddhistic hierarchy, and re-establishing the caste supremacy of the Bráhmans. Under such circumstances the object of the Brahmanical compilers in inventing these absurd myths is sufficiently obvious; they desired to associate the ancient gods of India with the favourite heroes of the Hindús. The mythical wars of Arjuna against the Daityas would also appear to be not without significance, if the Daityas may be identified with the Buddhists; and this identification is not wholly without foundation. The Daityas possessed horses of the colour of peacocks, and peacocks are especially the sacred emblem of the Buddhists. Moreover the statement that the Daityas inhabited the islands of the sea is in perfect accordance with this view; as the Buddhists certainly took refuge in Burmah and Ceylon when driven out by the Bráhmans from the great Indian peninsula.

Having thus disposed of these somewhat distracting myths, it is refreshing to return to the more authentic and natural traditions of the exile of the Pándavas. From the simple incidents which follow, it would seem that the Pándavas never strayed to a great distance from their Raj; and that they only moved about in search of game, residing in some temporary hut or booth which they probably constructed for themselves. They were accompanied

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Favourite
heroes of the
Hindús associ-
ated with the
old national
gods in the age
of Brahmanical
revival against
Buddhism.

Wars of Arjuna
against the
Daityas typical
of the wars of
the Brahman
against the
Buddhists.

2nd, Authen-
tic portion of
the legend of
the twelve years'
exile.
Indications that
the Pándavas
never wandered
at a great dis-
tance from their
Raj.

Life of the Pán-
davas in the
jungle.

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by their wife Draupadí, and are said to have also taken their priest Dhaumya with them; but the references to the latter personage are by no means satisfactory, nor is his presence in any way necessary to the story. Kuntí, as already stated, was left behind at Hastinápura. The five sons of Draupadí appear to have been sent to the house of her father Drupada; whilst Subhadrá, if she really were married to Arjuna, would seem to have returned to her father's house at Dwáraká, accompanied by her son Abhimanyu.

Four incidents
in the jungle life
of the Pándavas.

The incidents in the jungle life of the Pándavas, which are either authentic in themselves, or apparently have reference to actual events, are four in number, namely:—

1st, The capture of Duryodhana and Karna by the Gandharva tribe, and their subsequent release by the Pándavas.

2nd, The Vaislinava sacrifice performed by Duryodhana.

3rd, Yudhishtira's dream.

4th, The attempt of Jayadratha to carry off Draupadí.

1st, The capture
of Duryodhana
and Karna by
the Gandharvas.

The first of these traditions, namely, the capture of Duryodhana and Karna by the Gandharva tribe, and their subsequent release by the Pándavas, may be related as follows:—

Tradition of the
Kauravas going
out into the
jungle to mark
the cattle, but
really to spy out
the Pándavas.

And it came to pass that whilst the Pándavas were sojourning in the jungle, Raja Duryodhana desired to spy out their misery, and flaunt his own magnificence before them. Now every three years it was the custom for the Kauravas to go out into the pastures and mark all the calves, and to renew the marks upon the cows; and as it was known full well that the Mahádeva would forbid them from

going near the Pándavas, Duryodhana asked for leave to go out and mark the cattle. And the Mahárāja gave his consent, and Duryodhana, and Karna, and many of the Kauravas departed out of the city, and after hunting in the jungle many days, they came near to the spot where the Pándavas were encamped. Now on a certain day Duryodhana sent on his people to pitch his tent by the side of a great lake, and it so happened that a band of the Gandharva tribe had already pitched their tents on the same spot; and the servants of Duryodhana came back and told their master. Then Duryodhana sent an insolent message to the Gandharvas, and ordered them to take up their tents and depart with all speed. And the Gandharvas went out and fought against Duryodhana, and defeated him, and took him prisoner, together with Karna and many of the Kauravas. And some of those who fled went and told the Pándavas that their kinsmen had been taken prisoners by the Gandharvas; and the Pándavas went out and fought the Gandharvas and utterly routed them, and compelled them to restore the prisoners they had taken. And Yudhishtira gave a feast to the Kauravas, and called Duryodhana his brother; and Duryodhana affected to be much pleased, but his pride was humbled, and he was very wroth, and he would have killed himself, but for the hope that the day would come when he would be fully avenged. Duryodhana then returned to the city of Hastinápur, and on a certain day there was a Council held in the palace of the Mahárāja, and Bhíshma arose and praised the valour of the Pándavas and advised Duryodhana to make peace with them; but Duryodhana rose up and smiled contemptuously, and left the assembly without speaking one word, and Bhíshma returned in great indignation to his own house.

Insolence of
Duryodhana to
the Gandhar-
vas.

Duryodhana and
Karna defeated
and taken pri-
soners by the
Gandharvas.

The Pándavas
came to their
rescue.

Mortification of
Duryodhana.

His resentment
at the public re-
buke adminis-
tered by Bhísh-
ma.

The foregoing simple tradition calls for little remark, but it is difficult to avoid noticing its curious resemblance to a corresponding incident in the patriarchal period of Hebrew history. It will be remembered that when Lot had been carried away

Similarity be-
tween the rescue
of Duryodhana
by the Pándava
and the feast
given by Yudhishtira,
to the rescue of
Lot by Abra-
ham, and the
feast of bread
and wine.

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prisoner by the Assyrians, he was rescued by Abraham and his armed servants, and the victory was celebrated by a feast of bread and wine. This similarity, however, by no means implies that the two narratives refer to the same event, but simply that such little victories followed by a feast were a characteristic of the patriarchal period.

2nd, The Vaishnava sacrifice performed by Duryodhana.

The second incident of the exile, namely, the Vaishnava sacrifice performed by Duryodhana, may now be related as follows:—

Jealous desire of Duryodhana to perform a Rajasúya.

After these things, Raja Duryodhana resolved to celebrate a Rajasúya, that should surpass the Rajasúya of his cousin Yudhishtira; and he called to his priest and said:—“Let all things be got ready for a Rajasúya sacrifice.” Then the priest answered:—“O Duryodhana, you cannot perform a Rajasúya whilst the Mahárāja is still alive, and whilst your enemy Yudhishtira is also alive; but you may perform a Vaishnava sacrifice, and all the Rajas who are your vassals may attend it; and this sacrifice is as great as a Rajasúya.” And Duryodhana said:—“Be it so!” So all things were made ready for a Vaishnava sacrifice; and messengers were sent to summon all the Chieftains belonging to the Raj that they should attend the sacrifice.

Disqualified whilst the Mahárāja and Yudhishtira are alive.

Prepares to perform a Vaishnava sacrifice.

His brother Duhsásana insultingly invites the Pándavas to the sacrifice.

Now whilst the messengers were going their rounds, it came into the heart of Duhsásana, the brother of Duryodhana, to send a messenger to Yudhishtira, to invite the Pándavas to be present likewise; and the man went his way and delivered the message to his brethren. Then Yudhishtira, ever mild and dignified, thus made reply:—“Such a sacrifice as Raja Duryodhana is about to perform must redound to the exaltation of the whole house of Bhárata; but I and my brethren cannot attend until the years of our exile be accomplished.” But Bhíma was very wroth, and he cried out to the messenger:—“Go and tell Raja Duryodhana, that when the thirteen years are over, Raja Yudhishtira will kindle such a sacrifice with his weapons

Mild answer of Yudhishtira.

Wrathful reply of Bhíma.

as will burn up all the sons of Dhritaráshtira.”¹ These messages were duly delivered to Raja Duryodhana, but he answered not a word.

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After this Raja Duryodhana performed the Vaishnava sacrifice without the city, and distributed much provisions, and many dresses, and rich gifts; and all those who were his friends said that no one had ever before performed so great a sacrifice, whilst those who were his enemies said that the sacrifice was not worth one-sixteenth of the Rajasúya of Yudhishtira. And Duryodhana returned to his own house in great state, while the eulogists and story-tellers went before him and opened their mouths in his praise, and celebrated the deeds of his fathers; and all the people came out in great multitudes, and scattered flowers and parched grain along the road before him. And Karna said to Duryodhana:—“By the auspicious force of your great destiny you have brought this sacrifice to an end; and when by your fortunate power you shall have slain the Pándavas, and shall perform the Rajasúya, I too will be present and pay you homage.” Duryodhana answered:—“When I have slain the Pándavas, I will certainly perform the Rajasúya, and you shall be there to do me reverence.” Then Karna vowed a vow, saying:—“I will neither wash my feet, nor eat venison, and I will say nay to every one who asks me for a favour, until I have slain Arjuna.” And the spies of the Pándavas carried intelligence of all that occurred to Raja Yudhishtira; and when Yudhishtira heard that Karna had bound himself by a vow to slay Arjuna, he was very sorrowful, for he knew that the day would come when there would be a great battle between Arjuna and Karna.

Duryodhana performs the Vaishnava sacrifice.

Divers opinions of his friends and enemies.

Returns to his palace in a great procession.

Congratulations of Karna.

Karna's vow to slay Arjuna.

Sorrow of Yudhishtira.

The foregoing tradition of the Vaishnava sacrifice that was performed by Duryodhana throws a

Review of the tradition of the sacrifice of Duryodhana.

¹ William the Norman is said to have uttered a similar rough threat to that of Bhíma. William was very corpulent and confined to his chamber. The French King remarked that his English brother was a long time lying in. William retorted that there should be no lack of tapers at his churching, and he kept his word by ravaging France with fire and sword.

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Reasons why
Duryodhana
could not per-
form a Rajasúya
as Yudhishtira
had done.

Doubts respect-
ing the Vaishna-
va sacrifice.

3rd, Yudhishtira's dream.

Apparently a
Buddhistic par-
able.

Legend of the
dream.

The animals of
the jungle im-
plore Yudhishtira to leave.

clearer light upon the institution known as the Rajasúya, inasmuch as it confirms the view that a Rajasúya was emphatically an assertion of sovereignty. Duryodhana could not assert his sovereignty because his father was still living, and because his enemy and rival, Yudhishtira, was alive also. Yudhishtira, on the other hand, had been in a condition to perform a Rajasúya, because he had established an independent Raj at Indra-prastha, and had succeeded in conquering all who had opposed him. It is, however, difficult to say in what respect the Vaishnava sacrifice differed from the Rajasúya. The worship of Vishnu appears indeed to have been of a comparatively modern origin, and to have belonged to a period posterior to the age of animal sacrifices. Under such circumstances, whilst the fact may be admitted that Duryodhana performed a sacrifice, the statement that it was a Vaishnava sacrifice may be regarded as a later interpolation.

The third incident of the exile, namely, Yudhishtira's dream, is mythical in its present form, but still is evidently founded on authentic fact. The Pándavas prepared to move to another forest, apparently because the game had become scarce in the neighbourhood of their encampment; and this simple incident has been converted into a significant parable which bears traces of a Buddhistic origin. The parable is as follows:—

Now it so happened that Yudhishtira dreamed a dream, and in his dream the wild animals of the forest came to him weeping and trembling with fear, and they said to him:—
“We are the very few animals that have escaped your hands, and we therefore pray you to remove to another place that we

ourselves may be relieved from the terror of our lives, and may multiply again as before." And Yudhishtira was moved with sorrow, and when he awoke he told his dream to his brethren how that the animals had implored his mercy. So the Pándavas went away with their wife Draupadí and priest Dhaumya, and dwelt in the forest of Káma, and took up their abode in a hut, which was given to them by a holy Rishi who dwelt in that quarter.

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The Pándavas
move to the
forest of Káma.

The fourth incident in the twelve years' exile, namely, Jayadratha's attempt to carry off Draupadí, throws a strange light upon the old jungle life, which many Kshatriya heroes appear to have occasionally led in days of yore. The tradition may be related as follows:—

4th. The attempt
of Jayadratha to
carry off Draupadí.

And it came to pass that one day the Pándavas went out to hunt in the forest, and they left their wife Draupadí, with her own consent, in charge of the priest Dhaumya. And it happened that Jayadratha, the Raja of Sindhu, was going on that day with a great train to Chedipur to celebrate his marriage with the daughter of the Raja of that city; and he passed by the hut, and saw Draupadí standing against a tree, and he was stricken with her beauty; and he said in his heart:—"If this beautiful damsel be not already married I will go no further, but will espouse her." And he sent a Chieftain who was with him to go and inquire her name and lineage; and the Chieftain alighted from his chariot and went to Draupadí, and inquired who she was, and told her his own name, and the name of Jayadratha, and also the names of the other Chieftains who were with them. Now when Draupadí saw that a strange man was coming towards her, she left the tree, and drew her veil around her; but when the Chieftain had finished speaking, she came forward and said:—"As there is neither man nor woman near, I must myself answer your questions: But I know who you are; your father is Raja of Saurashtra, and Jayadratha is my kinsman, for he has married Duhsalá, who is the daughter of Mahárája Dhritaráshtira: I am Draupadí, the daughter of Raja Drupada, and the wife of the five

Jayadratha,
Raja of Sindhu,
visits Draupadí
in the absence
of her husbands.

Falls in love
with Draupadí.

Sends a Chief-
tain to inquire
her name and
lineage.

Conversation
between the
Chieftain and
Draupadí.

Draupadí's prof-
fered hospitali-
ties.

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Jayadratha enters the hut.

His wicked proposals to Draupadi.

Rage of Draupadi.

Her curses and threats.

Jayadratha carries away Draupadi in his chariot by main force.

Laws of the Kshatriyas concerning the carrying away of women.

Rajas of Indra-prastha : My husbands have gone out to hunt in the forest, but they will soon return : Alight, therefore, all of you, for Raja Yudhishtira will be gladdened at your coming, and will prepare a feast for you." So the man went and told Raja Jayadratha all that she had said ; and Jayadratha got down from his chariot, he and six Chieftains who were with him, and entered the house like a jackal entering a pagoda. And Jayadratha asked Draupadi if all was well with her and her husbands ; and she replied that all was well. And Draupadi desired that he would take a seat, and she offered to bring water to wash his feet, saying :—"The Pándavas will soon return with plenty of venison, and Raja Yudhishtira will rejoice to make you welcome." Then Raja Jayadratha said to her :—"Put yourself to no trouble on my account, but get you into my chariot, that we may be happy together : The Pándavas have lost their Raj, and have become vagabonds in the jungle ; so do not waste your attentions upon such husbands as these, but leave them to themselves and come with me, and I will make you my Rání." Then Draupadi knit her brow and arose in anger, and said :—"Get you gone to your own land, for my husbands are Rajas of great renown, as deadly as serpents, and as powerful as Indra. Would you attack a wild elephant with a staff, or arouse a sleeping lion with a switch ? Would you kick a tiger with your foot, or stroke a venomous serpent with your toes ? Yet such will my husbands be unto you, unless you depart with all speed to your own home." Then Raja Jayadratha tried to soothe her, but she heeded not his words, but poured forth curses upon him, and threatened him with the arrow of Arjuna, and the mace of Bhíma, and the wrath of all her husbands. And the Raja put forth his hand, and took hold of her garment ; and she struck him with her fist and knocked him down. Then the Raja arose and seized her with all his strength, and placed her in his chariot, while she shrieked and cried out to the priest Dhaumya for help and succour. And Dhaumya came out and said :—"O Jayadratha, you are breaking the good old laws of the Kshatriyas, for by those laws you cannot take

away this woman until you have vanquished all her husbands." But the Raja heeded not his words, but placed Draupadí in his own chariot, and drove away, and the old priest followed after him weeping and lamenting.

The Pándavas return to their hut and learn what has occurred.

Pursuit of Jayadratha.

Jayadratha abandons Draupadí and seeks to escape.

Yudhishtira's clemency.

Wrath of Draupadí.

Return of Yudhishtira with Draupadí.

All this while the Pándavas had been hunting in the forest, but Yudhishtira had seen many evil omens, and before the day was half spent, he persuaded his brethren to return. Now as they approached the hut they did not see Draupadí, but they beheld her little maid lying upon the ground and weeping violently; and the maid told them how Raja Jayadratha had carried away Draupadí, like a dog who has seized the sacrificial meat, and she pointed out the way he had gone, and the marks of his chariot-wheels. Then the Pándavas set off in hot haste, and soon approached their enemy; and so discharged their arrows that many of the Chieftains were killed. And the heart of Jayadratha was filled with dismay, and he set down Draupadí from his chariot, and drove with all speed to a thicket which was hard by. Then Bhíma said to Yudhishtira:—"Go home now with Draupadí, and with our brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva: As for me, though Jayadratha fled to the caves beneath the earth, and had Indra himself for his charioteer, he should not escape my hands." Yudhishtira replied:—"O my brother, Jayadratha has been very wicked, but he has married the sister of Duryodhana, and we may not kill our kinsman." But Draupadí was mad with anger at these words, and cried in a loud voice to Bhíma and Arjuna:—"If you have any regard for me you will slay this Jayadratha: He is the worst of Rajas and the vilest of men: The most exalted of all the ancient sages has said that the man who carries off the wife of another in times of peace must be pursued and put to death, even though he desist from his wicked purpose." Draupadí then returned to the hut, accompanied by Yudhishtira and Nakula and Sahadeva.

When Bhíma and Arjuna heard the words of Draupadí, their wrath was kindled greatly against Jayadratha, and they pursued him hotly, and taunted him with his prowess in running away with their wife, and called upon him to turn

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Bhíma drags
Jayadratha
from his chariot
and makes him
a slave.

Humiliating
submission of
Jayadratha.

Draupadī orders
his release.

and fight them ; but he was sore afraid, and would not turn lest they should slay him. Then Bhíma ran swiftly after him, and caught him by the hair of his head, and dragged him from his chariot to the ground, and kicked and beat him until his reason had almost left him, but Arjuna bade his brother to remember the words of Yudhishtíra and to spare the life of his kinsman. So Bhíma cut off all the hair of Jayadratha's head excepting five locks, and agreed to spare his life on the condition that he went into the assembly of the Pándavas, and acknowledged himself to be their slave. So Jayadratha yielded, and Bhíma led him to the hut, and brought him into the presence of Yudhishtíra, and his mind was well nigh gone. And when Yudhishtíra saw his condition he ordered Bhíma to release him ; but Bhíma refused unless commanded by Draupadī, because Jayadratha had become the slave of the Pándavas. Draupadī then came up, and said :—" As Jayadratha is become a slave by token of his five locks, I pray you to release him." So Bhíma released him, and he threw himself at the feet of Yudhishtíra ; and Yudhishtíra bade him depart ; and he hung down his head with shame and said not a word, but went his way much abashed to his own country.

view of the
of
Jayadratha car-
away
Draupadī.

Jayadratha al-
ready married to
Duhsalá,
daughter of
Mahárája Dhri-
taráshtra.

Laws of the
Kshatriyas re-
specting the
carrying away
of women.

The foregoing tradition of the attempt of Jayadratha to carry away Draupadī bears every impress of being authentic, but yet presents a few difficulties which seem to demand notice. The curious coincidence that Jayadratha should have made the attempt whilst on his way to marry another lady is perhaps sufficiently explained in the narrative, but it does seem remarkable that he should have been already married to Duhsalá ; and it will appear hereafter that Duhsalá was still living. But perhaps the most important point of the tradition is the definition of the law of the Kshatriyas in such cases, to which both Draupadī and the priest Dhaumya seem to have appealed. According to Draupadī, the

man who carried off the wife of another in time of peace was to be pursued to the death. According to Dhaumya, no man could rightfully carry away the wife of another unless he had first vanquished her husband or husbands. This subject however has already been discussed in a previous chapter, and it is only necessary to draw attention to the points raised.

CHAPTER IX.

SECOND EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS—THE THIRTEENTH YEAR IN A CITY.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Preparations of
the Pándavas
for dwelling dis-
guised in a
foreign city dur-
ing the thir-
teenth year.

Difficulties in
reference to the
authenticity of
the story.

Story of the
amour between
a Commander
and a waiting-
maid, an au-
thentic tradi-
tion.

SHORTLY after the attempt of Jayadratha to carry away Draupadí, the period of twelve years' exile in the jungle is said to have drawn towards a close. Accordingly the Pándavas sent their priest, Dhaumya, to reside in the city of their father-in-law, Raja Drupada; whilst they and their joint wife Draupadí prepared to dwell in some foreign city, so perfectly disguised that the Kauravas should be unable to discover their place of concealment. The romantic character of the last stipulation, and the difficulty of reconciling a residence in a foreign city with the ancient condition of the Kshatriyas as Aryan settlers from a distant country, are sufficient to excite suspicions of the story, or at any rate of such portions of the story as refer to the Pándavas. Moreover, the disguises assumed by the Pándavas and their joint wife appear to be highly improbable, whilst that of Arjuna is simply impossible. Then, again, the descriptions of battles are wild myths, in which armies are defeated by single-handed heroes, whilst one army falls down insensible at the mere sound of a war shell. At the same time, the main incident, which refers to an amour between a mighty warrior and the waiting-maid of a Rání,

appears to be a relic of an ancient and authentic tradition, altogether differing both in civilization and religion from the traditionary history of the house of Bhárata. It belongs to a period long anterior to the rise of Brahmanical ascendancy, but comprises graphic pictures of the palace life of Hindú Rajas, in an age when young Princes were brought up with the women, and when eunuchs taught music and dancing to the young damsels in the zenana. Again, the story of the amour turns upon a dread of ghosts, which finds no expression in the traditions of the house of Bhárata; and it is especially remarkable that the Gandharvas, who are generally represented as a Hill tribe with whom the Kshatriyas at Hastinápur were frequently at war, are introduced in the story as invisible demons, prone to love affairs with mortal women, and capable of wreaking their supernatural wrath upon mortal rivals. Accordingly an attempt will be made hereafter to separate the more authentic tradition, which refers to the amour, from the more improbable details which refer to the Pándavas. But in the first instance it seems necessary to reproduce the entire legend of the thirteenth year, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, and which may now be related without any further introduction, as follows:—

Now according to the rule of their exile it had been agreed that when the Pándavas had accomplished twelve years of wanderings in the jungle, they should take up their abode in any city they might choose, and remain there for a single year; and if during that year the Kauravas failed to discover them, they were to be restored to their Raj, but if the Kauravas discovered their disguise, they were to go for another twelve years into the jungle, and a thirteenth year in disguise, as before. Accordingly the Pándavas took

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

Wide difference between the tradition of the amour, and the traditions of the house of Bhárata.

Difference in the conception of Gandharvas.

Possible separation of the tradition of the amour, from the myth of the adventures of the Pándavas during the thirteenth year.

Fiction of the thirteenth year.

Stipulation as regards disguise.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

The Pándavas
determine to go
to the city of
Raja Viráta.

Conceal their
clothes and wea-
pons on a tree in
the place of
burning.

Set up a dead
body to guard
the tree.

Pándavas and
Draupadí as-
sume new
names, and ap-
ply for service
to Raja Viráta.

Grace and
majesty of Yud-
hishtira.

counsel together, and especially with Arjuna, for he had visited many cities when he had gone into exile on account of Draupadí; and they resolved to go to the city of Raja Viráta, and to enter into the service of that Raja. And as they came near the city, they proceeded to the spot where the people of that place were accustomed to burn their dead; and there they laid aside their weapons and their garments, and disguised themselves; and they hid their weapons and their old garments in the branches of a tree, and they took a dead body which they found in that place, and hung it on the trunk of the tree, and cried out with a loud voice:—"This is the dead body of our mother, and it is to remain here for a whole year, after which we will take it down and burn it." So it was rumoured abroad throughout that country that a party of travellers had hung the dead body of their mother on the trunk of that tree, and would not return until a year had expired; and no man would go near the tree lest he should in any way offend the ghost of the dead mother of the strange men.

After this the Pándavas and Draupadí took other names,¹ so that neither Raja Viráta, nor the people of the city, should discover who they were; and they then went together to the gate of the palace, where the Raja and his Chiefs were sitting in Council. And Yudhishtira was the first to enter the assembly, and when those who were present saw him, they were amazed at his grace and majesty; and the Raja seeing that he was a stranger, asked him the reason of his coming. Yudhishtira answered:—"I am a man who has met with nothing but danger and calamity, and having heard many praises of your benevolent qualities, I have come to put myself under your protection that I may be relieved of my distress." The Raja then asked his con-

¹ Throughout this portion of the narrative in the Mahá Bhárata the new names are employed so long as the Pándavas continued in their disguise. But, as these new names would only confuse the European reader, they are omitted from the text, and the old names preserved throughout the story. The order in which each of the Pándavas presented himself to the assembly has been slightly modified, as it is more convenient to represent them as entering the Hall in the order of their respective ages.

Yudhishtira
engaged as a
private com-
panion and
teacher of dice-
playing to Raja
Virata.Bhima engaged
as head cook.Arjuna engaged
as a eunuch to
teach music and
dancing.Nakula engaged
as master of the
horse.Sahadeva en-
gaged as master
of the cattle
and caster of
nativities.Draupadi enters
the presence of
the Ráni.

dition and descent; and he replied:—"I am a Bráhmaṇ, and for some time I was a retainer of Raja Yudhishtira, and his private companion, and I taught him the whole art of throwing dice." The Raja then said:—"You have come at a favourable moment, for I am in want of an instructor in the mystery of play, that I may defeat the tricks of artful gamblers; and I will show you the same favour and patronage as were shown to you by Raja Yudhishtira." When the Raja had engaged him, the giant Bhíma entered the assembly, clothed in black garments like a cook, and having an iron ladle in one hand, and a rusty scimeter in the other; and all present were struck with his strange appearance, and cried out:—"What wonderful giant is this?" Then the Raja asked him who he was, and Bhíma replied:—"I was cook to Raja Yudhishtira, and I understand the whole art of cookery, and I know the whole science of war, and my strength is such that it would be difficult for you to find a man who could cope with me." Then the Raja said:—"You have in your countenance all the marks of command and sovereignty, but as it is your own proposal, I make you the head of the cooks in my palace, so that the fear of your strength may keep all other cooks from wasting or thieving the victuals." Arjuna then came forward dressed as a eunuch, with earrings in his ears, and a woman's necklace round his neck, and a woman's bracelets upon his wrists; and he also wore a woman's vest to hide the scars which had been made upon his shoulder by his bow-string. And he said that he could sing, and also play upon musical instruments, and that he likewise understood dancing, and that he was well qualified to teach all those arts to ladies; so the Raja engaged him to perfect his daughter in the practice of music and dancing. After this Nakula and Sahadeva entered the assembly, and the Raja engaged Nakula to be master of his horse, and Sahadeva to be master of his cattle; and as Sahadeva had learnt the whole science of astronomy from his tutor Drona, he was also engaged to cast nativities and tell fortunes.

Meanwhile the Ráni had seen Draupadí from the terrace of her apartments, and had sent for her; and Draupadí

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INDIA.
PART II.

The Rání ob-
jects to Drau-
padí's beauty.

Draupadí's
sorrow of her five
brothers.

Engaged as a
maid-servant by
the Rání.

Tranquil life of
the Pándavas
and Draupadí.

Manner in which
the brethren
shared their
emoluments.

Raja Viráta
holds a great
festival.

presented herself to the Raja's wife, dressed in mean attire, with her hair untied according to her vow, but twisted into one string, like the tail of a serpent; and the women of the Raja were much pleased with her appearance, and they gathered around her, and the Rání asked her who she was. Draupadí answered:—"I am a maid-servant, and ready to serve any one who will employ me; and I have been servant to the wife of Krishna, and afterwards was servant to Draupadí, the wife of the Pándavas, who was very fond of me, and used to call me her dearest friend." The Rání said:—"You do not look like a servant, but rather like the wife of a Raja; and you are far too beautiful for me, for if I were to take you into my service, and the Raja should see you, he will never look on me any more; so I will have nothing to do with you." Draupadí replied:—"Have no fear of me on account of the Raja, for five Gandharvas keep constant watch over me; and if any one looks at me with an eye of desire, those Gandharvas will speedily put him to death: I can do every kind of service, but I will not wash the feet of any one, nor will I eat the victuals which any one may leave after a meal." So the Rání said:—"Since this is the case, I will take you into my service." And she engaged her.

And the five brethren and their wife Draupadí dwelt many days in great comfort and tranquillity of mind in the palace of Raja Viráta, and they found much favour in the eyes of the Raja and the Rání. And many Chieftains came to Yudhishtira, and engaged him to play, and he played with them, and won much money; and he carried all that he had won and laid it before Raja Viráta, but the Raja gave it to him back again. And Yudhishtira divided the money into six portions, one portion for himself, and one for each of his brothers, and he himself kept Draupadí's portion. And all the presents that any one of the other brethren received, he carried to his elder brother Yudhishtira, and Yudhishtira divided it in like manner.

Now when three months had passed away, Raja Viráta held a great festival; and all the fighting men and wrestlers,

and other athletes, came in great numbers from all the countries round about to exhibit their strength and skill before the Raja. And when the day of the festival had come, a mighty multitude were assembled from all the cities, and the Raja was there and all his Chieftains; and whenever one man overcame another, the multitude shouted aloud, and the Raja gave great gifts to the victor. Now one among the wrestlers, named Jimúta, had come from a far country, and he put all the rest to shame; for every man who stood up against him was conquered, so that, after a while, no man durst encounter him. Then the Raja and his Chieftains were sorely troubled that they had no wrestler in the Raj who could overthrow Jimúta; and the Raja called out in the assembly to know if there was any man who would fight Jimúta, but no man gave reply: Now after a while the Raja said:—"I have a warrior in my kitchen, whom I took into my service to be the head of all my cooks; and he boasted very much of his great strength and exceeding valour: Perchance he may be able to fight against this foreign wrestler." So the Raja sent for Bhíma. And Bhíma came out of the kitchen, and entered the presence of the Raja, and said:—"I am famished with hunger, and until I have eaten I cannot wrestle with this man Jimúta." So the Raja ordered that he should have as much victuals as he could eat, and the servants brought him heaps of provisions, such as would have sufficed for a great company; but Bhíma fell to and devoured them, to the amazement of all who saw him. And when Bhíma had finished eating, he went before the Raja, and the Raja bade him be of good courage. And Bhíma went out and challenged Jimúta to battle; and Jimúta came out in like manner, and accepted the challenge. Then Bhíma and Jimúta fought and struggled together like wild elephants, and they struck one another with their clenched fists; and all the other wrestlers looked on and marvelled at their fighting. Now when they had fought for a long while, and Jimúta was half spent, Bhíma rushed upon him, and seized him by the two legs, and raised him from the ground; and he whirled him several times round his own head, whilst Jimúta filled the

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

As-sembling of
puzilists and
wrestlers.
Exhibitions of
puzilism and
wrestling before
the Raja.
Superiority of
Jimúta, a
foreigner.

Trouble of the
Raja that none
of his own
wrestlers could
overcome
Jimúta.

The Raja sends
for Bhíma.

Bhíma enters
the presence,
but declines to
fight Jimúta un-
til he has satis-
fied his hunger.

Bhíma devours
an enormous
quantity of pro-
visions.

Great battle
between Bhíma
and Jimúta.

Bhíma whirls
Jimúta round
by the legs, and
dashes him
against the
ground.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Death of
Jimúta.

Acclamations of
the multitude
and great joy of
the Raja.

Bhíma richly
rewarded by the
Raja and his
Chieftains.

Great favour
shown to Bhí-
ma.

Bhíma's fights
with wild beasts
in the women's
apartments.

Satisfaction of
the Raja in the
singing and
dancing of his
daughter.

Arjuna reward-
ed by the Raja.

Satisfaction of
the Raja with
Nakula and
Sahadeva.

Commanding
influence pos-
sessed by Ki-
chaka, the
brother of the
Ráni.

air with his roaring. At last Bhíma dashed him against the ground with all his might, and Jimúta at that instant gave up the ghost and became a dead man.

And when the multitude saw that Jimúta had been slain by Bhíma, they set up a loud shout and filled the air with their acclamations. And the Raja leaped from his seat in great joy that the foreign wrestler had been overcome by one of his own servants. And he bestowed very many gifts and commendations upon Bhíma. And all the Chieftains in like manner gave many presents to Bhíma, each one according to his rank. And when it was night, Bhíma carried all the gifts he had received to his elder brother Yudhishtira, that they might be divided according to custom.

After this Raja Viráta took a great liking to Bhíma, and showed him much favour; and sometimes he took Bhíma into the apartments of his women, and made him fight with lions, and tigers, and bears, and Bhíma always killed every beast with one blow of his fist; and the Raja and the ladies wondered at his prowess, and gave many gifts to Bhíma, and very large quantities of victuals, which he devoured as fast as they were brought to him. In like manner the Raja very often called for Arjuna, and for the Princess his daughter, and the other young damsels of the Court, who were taught by the new master; and the damsels danced and sang before the Raja, and gave him such delight that he gave many presents to Arjuna. At the same time the Raja was much pleased with Nakula, for whenever he went to the stables he found his horses in excellent order, and he gave rich rewards to Nakula. Sahadeva also received much praise and many gifts from the Raja; for he foretold very correctly everything before it happened, whilst the cattle under his care multiplied abundantly, and the cows yielded three or four times as much milk as they had ever done before.

Now there dwelt in the city of Viráta a warrior of great might and valour, named Kichaka, and he was brother of the Ráni, and commanded all the forces of the Raja; and

all the affairs of the Raj were in his hands, and he did as he pleased, and the Raja feared him, according to the ancient saying, that the brother of the Râni is always to be feared by the Raja. And it came to pass one day that Kîchaka proceeded to the palace, and entered the apartments of the women to pay a visit to his sister, when his eye fell upon Draupadî, and he was stricken with her beauty; and he said within his heart, I have seen many lovely women, and I have many belonging to me, but never did I behold one so beautiful before; and he asked his sister who she was, and the Râni told him. And Kîchaka then said to his sister:—"She is worthy to be the mistress, and to have you for a waiting-maid: Contrive now, I pray you, that she may come to my house." The Râni replied:—"This woman says she has five Gandharvas who ever keep watch over her; and if any man speak to her the Gandharvas will kill him: Moreover, her conduct and behaviour are most excellent: Therefore I pray you to say nothing to her." But Kîchaka would not be refused, and after a while he prevailed with his sister, and she promised to send Draupadî to his house. So Kîchaka left his sister and went to Draupadî, and began to praise her, and said:—"Never before have I beheld so beautiful a woman as you are; and henceforth I will be your slave." But Draupadî replied:—"Do not speak such words to me, for there are five lions who keep guard over me, and if you value your life you will not come near me." And Kîchaka laughed, and went his way to his own house.

Kîchaka prevails with the Râni to send Draupadî to his house.

A short while after Kîchaka had gone out of the palace, the Râni said to Draupadî:—"I am very thirsty: Take this cup to my brother's house and bring it me back filled with wine." Draupadî answered:—"I cannot go to his house, as I observe that he is a man wanting in modesty: So I pray you to send another messenger." But the Râni would not, but put the cup upon a golden salver, and placed the salver upon the head of Draupadî, and bade her carry it to Kîchaka; and Draupadî went away weeping, but she looked at the world-enlightening Sun, and prayed to the bright and

Draupadî sent by the Râni to bring a cup of wine from the house of Kîchaka.

Draupadî prays to the Sun for

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

said:—"I will think more of this matter; but go now, I pray you, and burn the dead bodies of Kíchaka and his brethren."

Timid directions of the Raja to the Rání for getting rid of Draupadi.

All this while the Raja was so frightened at the Gandharvas, and so fearful lest he should offend them, that he would consult with none of his Council respecting them. But he called for his Rání, and said to her:—"This maid servant of yours is an evil witch, who must be sent out of the city to some other quarter, so that this country may be purged from her craft: But do you break the matter to her so that she may not know that I have said it, lest the Gandharvas should wreak their vengeance upon me."

Draupadi enters the music and dancing-room.

Now by this time Draupadí had entered the palace, and proceeded to the music and dancing-room, where Arjuna was busy instructing the damsels; and the damsels came up and offered her many congratulations, seeing that she had escaped from the hands of Kíchaka and his brethren. And Arjuna feigned not to know what had happened, and he said to her:—"Tell me, I pray you, how it was that Kíchaka and his brethren have been slain." But Draupadí was very wroth with Arjuna, for he had heard her cries and had not come to succour her, and she said to him:—"What have you to do with men and women? Your duty is to teach the damsels to sing and dance; and men and women can have no interest for you." And Draupadí turned her back upon Arjuna, and took no further heed of his words.

Arjuna protests her against Arjuna for not coming to her rescue.

After this the damsels took Draupadí by the hand, and led her away into the presence of the Rání. And when the Rání saw Draupadí, she said to her:—"Raja Viráta is in great alarm at you and your Gandharvas, and has ceased to call me to his presence: This day all my brethren have been slain because of you, and to-morrow I may lose my husband likewise: So I will not keep you any longer in my service, and you must go now to some other city." And Draupadí answered:—"Your words are true, but when thirteen days are over, the year of my service will have expired, and then my Gandharvas will bestow blessings upon you, and lead me away to another place." And the

The damsels lead Draupadi into the presence of the Rání. The Rání dismisses Draupadi from her service.

Draupadi's reply.

General fear to offend Draupadi.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.Proceedings of
the Kauravas
during the thir-
teenth year.
Fail to discover
the Pándavas.Spies bring the
news of the
death of
Kichaka.Susarman, Raja
of Trigarta,
proposes an in-
vasion of the
Raj of Viráta,
which is ap-
proved by the
Kauravas.Plan of cam-
paign: Susar-
man to invade
the Raj from
the north and
Duryodhana
from the south.Invasion of Su-
sarman in the
northern
quarter.The Herdsmen
carry the tid-
ings to Raja
Viráta.The Raja goes
etc.

Ráñś made no reply, but told the Raja all that Draupadí had said; for since the slaughter of Kichaka and his brethren, no one durst say a word that could offend Draupadí.

Now all this while the Kauravas had been dwelling in the city of Hastinápur, and they had sent spies to all the quarters of the earth to discover the city where the Pándavas were residing, and none had brought back any tidings of the brethren. But it so happened that certain of the spies had proceeded to the city of Raja Viráta, and they brought the news that Kichaka had been slain on account of a woman. At this time the Raja of Trigarta, whose name was Susarman, was staying at Hastinápur; and whilst the Kauravas were consulting as to what should be done, Susarman arose and said:—"The spies from the city of Viráta have told us that our enemy Kichaka is dead: Let us now join our forces and attack the Raja of Viráta, for his army is powerless by reason of the death of their Commander." And Karna said:—"The counsel of Susarman is wise: We cannot be ever thinking about the Pándavas, so let us go forth and make war against the Raja of Viráta." And Duryodhana and all the Council agreed to the war.

After this the Kauravas assembled all their forces, and Susarman brought up all his army: and it was agreed between them that Susarman should march out first and invade the country of Viráta on the northern side, and that Duryodhana should then enter the country on the southern side and near unto the city of Viráta. And Susarman did as was determined upon, and he set out on the seventh day of the full moon, and invaded the northern quarter of the Raj of Viráta with all his army, and carried away much cattle; and it so happened that the day he carried away the cattle was the last day of the thirteenth year of the exile of the Pándavas. Now when the herdsmen saw their cattle in the hands of the enemy, they went with all speed to the city, and laid their complaints before Raja Viráta, and the Raja sent messengers to all quarters with a hue and cry to the ryots to make their escape with their flocks and herds; and the Raja mounted his chariot, and set out with a large army

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Single combat
between Susar-
man and Viráta.

Defeat and cap-
ture of Viráta.

Bhima rescues
the Raja, and
takes Susarman
prisoner.

Invasion of
Duryodhana in
the southern
country.

No warriors left
in the city ex-
cepting Uttar
and Arjuna.

to drive out the invaders, and all the Pándavas save Arjuna went with him. And when the day was far spent, the army of Viráta came up with the army of Susarman, and they fought fiercely one with the other, and many warriors were slain on either side. Then Raja Susarman sent a challenge to Raja Viráta, and the two Rajas fell to in single combat, until the sun had long set, and the darkness prevented their seeing each other, and the fighting came to a stand. Then the ground was sprinkled with water and the dust was well laid, and presently the moon arose and the battle-field was as light as day; and the combat was renewed between the two Rajas. And Susarman prevailed against Viráta, and bound him hand and foot with a rope, and cast him upon his own chariot, and drove away with his own people.

When Yudhishtira saw that Raja Viráta was carried away captive by Susarman, he said to his brother Bhíma:—"For one entire year have we eaten the Raja's rice, and shall we not deliver him out of the hands of his enemy?" So Yudhishtira stayed to command the army; and when the morning began to dawn, Bhíma went out with his two brothers Nakula and Sahadeva, and set off in pursuit of Susarman; and they overtook him, and slew his charioteer, and delivered Raja Viráta out of his hands; and Bhíma seized Susarman by the hair, and put chains upon his hands and a collar upon his neck, and carried him away prisoner. And all the cattle that had been carried away by Susarman were recovered, and there was also abundance of spoil; and Raja Viráta was loud in the praises of Yudhishtira and his brethren. And Bhíma led Susarman into the presence of the Raja; and when Susarman had tendered his submission, the Raja permitted him to depart to his own country.

Now while Raja Viráta and all his Chieftains had gone away to the northern country to fight against Susarman, Duryodhana and the Kauravas came with a great army and invaded the southern country, and they carried away much cattle. And the Chief of the herdsmen hastened to the city to carry the tidings to the Raja; but there were no warriors in the city save the Raja's young son Uttar, and Arjuna, who

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INDIA.
PART II.Youth and ignorance of
Uttar.The Chief of the
herdsmen urges
Uttar to go out
against the
Kauravas.Uttar pleads
that he has no
charioteer.Boasts before
the women.Arjuna agrees
to go.Mirth of the
damsels at seeing
Arjuna putting
on armour.The damsels
pray Arjuna to
bring home
plenty of spoil.Cowardly fear of
Uttar on beholding the
Kauravas.

was the music and dancing-master. And Uttar was but a boy, and he had been bred up in the apartments of the women, and knew nothing of war; and when the Chief of the herdsmen told him that the Kauravas had carried away the cattle, he was in sore dismay. And the Chief of the herdsmen said to Uttar:—"The Raja has left the Raj in your charge, and has often boasted of your prowess; so now you must go out and make war against the Kauravas, and bring back all the stolen cattle." And Uttar replied:—"I would go and fight these Kauravas with all readiness, but I have no man to drive my chariot; and how can I go out to battle without a charioteer?" So saying Uttar rose up, and entered the palace, and boasted before the women, saying:—"If I had but a charioteer I would go forth and conquer the Kauravas." And Draupadī heard his words, and said:—"O Uttar, the music and dancing-master has often driven the chariot of Arjuna to battle; and he will now peradventure drive your chariot against the Kauravas." So Uttar called his sister, whose name was Uttarā, and desired her to ask her teacher to become his charioteer; and she did so, and Arjuna consented to go. Then Arjuna called for a coat of mail, and arrayed himself in armour; and when the damsels saw what he was doing, they began to laugh, saying:—"What has a music and dancing-master to do with the weapons of men?" Meanwhile Uttar commanded his servants to put the weapons into his chariot; and he ascended the chariot, and desired Arjuna to mount likewise, and to drive away with all speed. And when the damsels saw Arjuna driving away, they cried out:—"We commit Uttar into your charge: Take heed that he returns in triumph, and brings us plenty of silks and cloths as spoil." Arjuna replied:—"After a victory all things may be obtained." So saying he drove away towards the south to do battle against the Kauravas.

Now when Arjuna had driven Uttar within sight of the army of the Kauravas, the heart of Uttar failed him, and his hair stood on end with terror. And Arjuna said:—"How can I face such mighty warriors as these?" And when Uttar heard

been done, they returned in great shame and sorrow to the city of Hastinápur.

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PART II.

Now after this great victory, Arjuna and Uttar returned to the city, and as they went they saw many of the soldiers of the Kauravas flying from the field; but Arjuna said to them:—"Fear not, for I will not slay a man unless he be in the field of battle, and fugitives and captives are as women in my eyes." And Arjuna and Uttar halted without the city; and Arjuna laid aside his arms, and put on his disguise as before; and messengers were sent on to the city to make known the victory, and the recovery of all the cattle.

Arjuna and Uttar return to the city.

Arjuna's forbearance as regards fugitives and captives.

Arjuna and Uttar halt without the city, but send tidings of the victory to the Raja.

Now soon after Arjuna and Uttar had gone out against the Kauravas, Raja Viráta was returning towards the city in triumph, having routed Raja Susarman and all his army. And the whole city went out to meet Raja Viráta, and to welcome him back with great joy; but Uttar was not amongst them. So the Raja inquired for his son, and learned that he had gone towards the south to fight the Kauravas, and that the music and dancing-master had gone with him to drive his chariot; and the Raja said:—"As I myself have defeated Susarman and all his army, the men whom Uttar has gone out to fight must be but weak and few; but I do not like that the music and dancing-master should have gone as charioteer, as he may have been terrified at the battle, and have taken flight." Yudhishtira replied:—"No defeat can befall that person who has had this music and dancing-master for his charioteer." At this moment the messengers of Uttar arrived at the city, and told the Raja how the Kauravas had been defeated and the cattle recovered from their hands; and Yudhishtira said that the victory was most excellent, but was to have been expected from the valour of the charioteer. But the Raja feigned not to hear the words of Yudhishtira, and cried out:—"Since I have defeated Susarman, and my son has defeated Duryodhana, let the drums be beaten at all the gates, and musical instruments be played in all the streets, and the city be dressed out in flowers and flags; and let all the most beautiful damsels put

Return of Raja Viráta after the defeat of Susarman.

The Raja hears that Uttar has gone out to battle, but distrusts the bravery of the music and dancing-master.

Yudhishtira praises the valour of the music and dancing-master.

The Raja orders preparations for receiving his victorious son.

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PART II.

Sits down to
play with
Yudhishtira.

Yudhishtira
ascribes the vic-
tory to the
music and danc-
ing-master.

Wrath of the
Raja.

Yudhishtira
sets his re-

The Raja dashes
the dice at
Yudhishtira
and makes his
nose bleed.

Uttar enters the
palace and tells
the true story.

on clean garments, and array themselves in all their jewels, and go forth and sing the songs of triumph; and let all the tribes go forth with them and welcome the return of the victorious hero Uttar." Then Raja Viráta ordered the dice to be brought, and called upon Yudhishtira to play a game; but Yudhishtira objected, and said:—"It is laid down in the Sástras that no man should play with another who is elated with joy; and this day you are elated with joy." But Viráta persisted, and Yudhishtira at last sat down to play; and in the middle of the game the Raja said:—"Take notice how my son has fought and defeated the Kauravas!" Yudhishtira replied:—"It is not surprising that your son conquered the Kauravas, when he has had the music and dancing-master for his charioteer." Then Raja Viráta flew into a rage, and said:—"Let me forbear as long as I will, you are determined still to chaunt the praises of this music and dancing-master: What is a eunuch that his feats should be so applauded? When my son has gained the victory, no man of sense would have brought forward the name of another: So if you wish any longer to retain my friendship, let me hear no more of this music and dancing-master." Yudhishtira answered:—"In a field where such warriors as Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna, and Duryodhana are in action, your son is by no means capable of sustaining a battle." Then Raja Viráta was exceedingly wroth, and he cried out:—"Is there no one here to give this foolish fellow his answer, and to stop his mouth?" And the Raja dashed the dice which he held in his hand so violently at the face of Yudhishtira that the blood fell from his nose, but Draupadí, who was standing by, caught the blood in her veil. At this same instant the Raja's servants came in and said that Uttar and his charioteer had returned to the palace, and were standing at the gate waiting to salute the Raja; and the Raja desired that they might be called in, but Yudhishtira cried out:—"Keep back the music and dancing-master, for if he should see my face besmeared with blood, he will slay the man who caused it, and all his people." So Uttar was brought in

whilst Arjuna stayed without; and he told his father truly all that had taken place, and discovered to him the true names and condition of the Pándavas. When the Raja heard this he was in great alarm, and he begged pardon of Yudhishtira and entreated that he might be forgiven. And Yudhishtira answered:—"I have banished wrath and passion altogether from my mind, but had this blood of mine fallen to the ground, it would have been a great misfortune for you, and all your house, and therefore it was fortunate that Draupadí caught it in her veil." Then Yudhishtira cleansed his face and the blood ceased to flow; and Arjuna was brought in and paid his respects to the Raja; and Uttar praised him to the Raja, and acknowledged his own cowardice; and all the garments of the Kauravas, which had been taken from the Chieftains while they lay senseless upon the field of battle, were sent to the inner apartments of the palace, and divided amongst the damsels and children.

Yudhishtira
forgives the
Raja.

Division of the
spoil.

After this Raja Viráta held a Council of all his Chieftains; and all the Pándavas were there, clothed in their royal robes, and they related all their adventures to the Raja and the Council. And the Raja paid them every mark of respect, and he pledged his word that he would assist them in recovering their Raj. And the Raja offered his daughter Uttará in marriage to Arjuna; but Arjuna answered:—"For a whole year I have been teaching this damsel, and I have been to her as a father, and she has been to me as a daughter: It is not therefore meet that I should take her as a wife; but if it please you and my elder brother Yudhishtira, let her be married to my son Abhimanyu." So Raja Viráta agreed, and he gave his daughter Uttará in marriage to the son of Arjuna; and a great marriage-feast was held; and Krishna came with his brother Balaráma, and with Subhadrá, the wife of Arjuna, and her son Abhimanyu who was to be married to Uttará; and Raja Drupada came also, with his son Dhrishta-dyumna; as well as all the Chieftains and allies of Raja Viráta. And the marriage of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, to Uttará, the daughter of

Raja Viráta promises in Council to assist the Pándavas in recovering their Raj.

Offers his daughter in marriage to Arjuna.

Arjuna's graceful refusal.

Marriage of Uttará, daughter of Raja Viráta, to Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna.

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Review of the
foregoing legend
of the thir-
teenth year.

Separation of
the amour of
Kíchaka from
the mythical
references to the
Pándavas.

Raja Viráta, was duly celebrated with every magnificence and sign of rejoicing.

The foregoing narrative of the thirteenth year of the exile of the Pándavas is no doubt a fiction so far as it refers to the Pándavas ; and sufficient stress has been laid upon this point at the opening of the present chapter. But whilst the details by which the Pándavas are associated with Raja Viráta and his family are forced and artificial, the main incidents of the amour of Kíchaka with the waiting-maid of the Rání are of a natural and life-like character, and bear the impress of being the remains of some independent tradition which has been borrowed from a foreign country. Accordingly, the attempt may now be made to divide the whole narrative into two distinct parts, each of which may be considered separately in the following order :—

1st, The authentic tradition of the amour of Kíchaka.

2nd, The mythical details by which the tradition of the amour has been joined on to that of the Pándavas.

1st, Tradition of
the amour of
Kíchaka.

Anterior to
Brahmanism
and Buddhism.

Religious ideas
connected with
ghosts.

Pastoral charac-
ter of the people.

The tradition of the amour of Kíchaka appears to belong to what may be called the Dark Ages of Hindú history. It contains no references whatever either to the gods of the Aryans, or to the ascendancy of the Bráhmans, or to the institution of caste, or to the doctrines of Buddha. The leading religious idea appears to have been a belief in the substantial existence of ghosts as demons capable of wreaking their wrath upon all offenders ; a characteristic which is generally supposed to indicate an aboriginal people of Turanian origin. At the same time, the wealth of the country appears to have con-

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.Ancient civilization.
Palace of the Raja.

Women's apartments.

Council-hall.

Kitchen.

Leading characters in the tradition of the amour.

Varied dialogue.

The plot.

The Rání's jealous fears respecting the waiting-maid allayed by her story of the five Gandharvas.

sisted of cattle and horses; a circumstance which would indicate a pastoral people. The scene, however, is chiefly laid in the palace of the Raja; and here are to be found evidences of refinement and civilization. There are the women's apartments where the Rání is attended by her maid, and where the Princess Uttará, and the other young damsels of the palace, are instructed in music and dancing by a eunuch, who wears a woman's dress and jewels. There is the Council-hall, where the Raja spends a large portion of his time in the company of his Chieftains; and there is the kitchen, where the sleepy and voracious warrior is supposed to be lording it over the under cooks, and preventing any theft or waste of victuals.

The characters that appear in this tradition are all simple and life-like. They comprise a timid Raja and a good-natured Rání; a mighty warrior and a captivating waiting-maid; a boyish Prince and his girlish sister. The dialogue varies from the grave discourse in the Council-hall to the passionate conversation in the women's apartments, and the merry chatter of light-hearted damsels in the music and dancing-room. The plot is perfectly intelligible. A beautiful woman of noble birth enters the service of a Rání as a waiting-maid; on which the Rání's brother falls in love with her. But this natural incident, simple as it is in itself, is surrounded by a number of details so strange and significant as to demand a careful consideration.

When the Rání first engaged the waiting-maid, she was fearful lest the charms of the new attendant should attract the admiration of the Raja. But the waiting-maid explained that she was guarded by

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Peculiar incidents in Kichaka's amour.

Wine drank by Hindu women.

Scene between Kichaka and the waiting-maid in the Council-hall.

Dialogue between the waiting-maid and the Raja.

Poetic justice in the slaughter of Kichaka.

Attempt to burn the waiting-maid alive.

The progress of Kichaka's amour is strange and primitive throughout, and may be referred to a period of remote antiquity. Kichaka not only falls in love with his sister's maid, but coolly asks his sister to send the maid to his house; and the Rání yields to his entreaties and despatches her maid-servant ostensibly for a cup of wine, a circumstance which seems to indicate that wine was occasionally drank by Hindú ladies in the olden time. The scuffle that ensued between Kichaka and his fair enslaver is perfectly intelligible; but not so the fact that when the insulted woman ran into the Council-hall for protection, she was followed by her admirer and kicked in the presence of the Raja. Another singular feature in the tradition is the dialogue between the servant girl and the Raja, in which the former declares that it is very unbecoming in the Raja to allow her to be kicked in his presence, whilst the latter excuses himself from interfering, on the ground that he did not know what had passed between the pair before they entered the Hall.

The plot between the cook and the waiting-maid for punishing Kichaka is in accordance with poetic justice; and more than one European tradition has been preserved in which a gallant had expected to meet a wife, and has suddenly found himself in the presence of an enraged husband. The horrible treatment of the remains of Kichaka after death is an Oriental idea of perfect revenge; whilst the grim joy of the waiting-woman at the sight is apparently an exaggeration, intended to indicate the righteous anger of a model wife at having her chastity assailed.

The climax of the narrative is reached when the

brethren of Kichaka seized the waiting-maid, and prepared to burn her upon the funeral pile with the body of the dead man. This barbarous proceeding had no connection with the later Brahmanical idea of self-sacrifice on the part of a widow in the expectation of rejoining her deceased lord. It originated rather in the desire of the nearest relatives of the dead man that he should enjoy in death the society of the woman whom he had most loved in life. In such cases the willingness or otherwise of the unfortunate victims would be wholly ignored; and their murder would be a scene too painful to contemplate. Indeed, it is almost possible to sympathize in the momentary delirium which impels a poor widow to throw herself upon the pile in the full expectation of enjoying everlasting bliss with her beloved husband in the realms of paradise. But the idea of putting an unhappy female to death, merely because she has unwittingly raised the desires of a voluptuary, is one upon which the mind can scarcely care to dwell. The distinction seems to be fully apprehended by a Hindú audience. Any interference in a Brahmanical satí would be regarded with a peculiar horror, which still finds expression in more remote districts; whilst in the present instance the sympathies are all enlisted in favour of the giant cook, who personates a Gandharva, and delivers Draupadí from the burning pile.

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PART II.

Distinction between the Brahmanical idea of satí, and the slaughter of a female favourite.

Interference in a Brahmanical satí regarded with horror.

In the later portions of the narrative the authentic details cannot be so plainly distinguished from those which are mythical. The invasions of Susarman and Duryodhana are almost entirely mythical; but the departure of Arjuna and Uttar in a war

Obscurity of the authentic details in the later portion of the narrative.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Procession of
damsels.

chariot, amidst the giggling of the damsels at seeing the eunuch in armour, and the girlish clamours for silks and cloths, forms a striking scene which may have been borrowed from some other tradition. In like manner the procession of damsels sent out by Raja Viráta to welcome the youthful conqueror is perfectly in accordance with the receptions given in ancient times to successful warriors, and calls to mind the procession of maidens who went out with timbrels and dances to welcome back the youthful David after the slaughter of Goliath of Gath, and who sang aloud:—"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

2nd, Mythical
details connect-
ing the tradition
of the amour of
Kichaka with
the story of the
Pándavas.

In turning to the mythical details which connect the tradition of the amour of Kichaka with the history of the Pándavas, it will be necessary, in the first instance, to inquire into the geographical position of the Raj of Viráta. Here, at the very outset, a difficulty presents itself of no ordinary magnitude. The local traditions of two widely distant countries present almost equal claims to the country of Viráta, namely, the peninsula of Guzerat on the western side of India, and the valley of the Brahmaputra on its eastern quarter. In the Mahá Bhárata, the Raj of Viráta is called Matsya, or the country of the fish, and the city is indifferently termed Matsya or Viráta. The local traditions of Guzerat declare that the site of Matsya-nuggur or Viráta-pur is occupied by the modern town of Dholka, which is situated on the southern coast of the neck of the peninsula.² The local traditions of eastern Bengal are more explicit. The district of Dinajpur is still called Matsya; and the remains of ancient forts, said to be

Geographical
position.

City of Viráta
identified with
the site of the
modern Dholka.

Country of Vi-
ráta identified
with Dinajpur.

² Forbes' Ras Mala, or Hindú Annals of Guzerat, vol. i. p. 103.

those of Virāta and Kichaka, are pointed out to this day as proofs of the truth of the tradition.² The whole of this region, however, would appear to have been the land of fable. Here it was that Bhīma fought against the Asuras; and it was in this same country that the sage Vyāsa was supernaturally born of Matsya, the fish-girl.³ Whether, however, the Raj of Virāta is to be placed in the peninsula of Guzerat or in the region of eastern Bengal, it is in either case far too distant from the neighbourhood of Hastināpur to admit of such campaigns as those of Duryodhana and Susarman. That great and conquering armies, like those of Sesostris and Semiramis, of Alexander and Timour, have occasionally traversed vast distances, cannot be doubted, but their movements resembled the migrations of nations, and have left their impress upon the history of the world. Then, again, at a later period, the Parthian horsemen have made their way from the valley of the Indus to the city of Jerusalem; whilst almost within our own time the Mahratta cavalry have scoured the great Indian peninsula from sea to sea. But both the Parthian and Mahratta armies were composed of organized and well-trained warriors, and invaded rich and luxurious regions, from which they raised vast contributions of gold, jewels, and beautiful women. The campaigns, however, of Duryodhana and Susarman were the mere marauding forays of two bands of cattle-lifters; and the

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PART II.

Dinajpur and
certainly a land of
fable.

Authenticity of
the story of the
birth of Vyāsa
and Susarman
disproved.

Large numbers
of Sesostris, Se-
miramis, Alexan-
der, and Timour.

Parthians.

Mahrattas.

Contrast be-
tween the here-
said expeditions
and the
cattle-lifting
forays of Du-
ryodhana and Su-
sarman.

² Buchanan's Report on the district of Dinajpur, preserved in Martin's Eastern India, vol. ii. p. 609 *et seq.*

³ In the original myth Raja Virāta is said to have been the brother of Matsya, and was preserved like her in the belly of a fish. These myths may be altogether rejected, as the depraved creations of monks, either Brahmins or Budhist, whose imaginations were ever turning upon women and the mysteries of reproduction.

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INDIA.
PART II.

readers of the Mahá Bhárata are called upon to believe that these petty Chieftains marched a distance of at least five or six hundred miles for the purpose of carrying away a few sheep and cows; and that, too, at a time, when the Aryan Kshatriyas appear to have had some difficulty in maintaining their outposts in the neighbourhood of Delhi.

Futile efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to associate the Pándavas with remote quarters of India.

Accordingly, the geographical notices must be regarded as another instance of the efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to associate the traditions of the Pándavas with the more remote populations of India, which can be referred in almost every instance to a mythical origin. In a word, it seems to be fully proved that every authentic tradition connected with the Raj of Bhárata refers either to the immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur and Indra-prastha, or else must be thrown back upon some locality further to the west or north, in the direction of Cabul or Cashmere.

Mythical character of the scene in which the Pándavas presented themselves to Viráta.

Yudhishtira and Bhima provoke discovery.

Modern tone of Yudhishtira's language.

His artificial reference to his own losses.

The scene in which the Pándavas first present themselves to Raja Viráta is as mythical as the geography of the Raj. Their ostensible object was to conceal their real names, and yet they appear to have provoked discovery, for Yudhishtira declares that he had been a retainer of Raja Yudhishtira, whilst Bhíma asserts that he had been cook to Raja Yudhishtira. Again, the language of Yudhishtira is the polished flattery of a suppliant in the court of a modern Raja; and is wholly wanting in that rude eloquence in which an ancient warrior might be expected to ask for protection. The bitter irony of Yudhishtira's explanation that he had been a teacher of dice, is wholly untrue to nature, and probably originated in sheer paucity of invention.

His losses at the gambling match may have indeed suggested the idea to the Brahmanical compiler, but it is altogether incredible that he should have deliberately revived the agony of that hour, without any cause or reason whatever. His assertion that he was a Bráhma is equally unintelligible, and probably originated in an abortive effort of the compilers to impart a Brahmanical tone to the legend; for the profession of gambling is scarcely compatible with that ideal of the Brahmanical caste which seems to have been generally present to the imaginations of the "arrangers."

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PART II.

Asserts himself
to be a Bráhma
and a dice-play-
er.

The disguises of Bhíma and Arjuna are also somewhat remarkable. The traditional appetite of Bhíma seems to have suggested the idea of his serving as a cook; although there are traces of a period when a knowledge of cookery was regarded as a royal accomplishment.⁵ But Arjuna's disguise is palpably mythical. By a miracle he became a eunuch for a year; and, indeed, without some such miracle, the Brahmanical compilers could scarcely have ventured to introduce him into a zenana. Considering that the Pándavas were rude warriors living in the practice of polyandry, the idea itself is a glaring anachronism; although in accordance with the manners which appear to have prevailed in the Courts of the later and more effeminate Rajas.

Mythical dis-
guises of Bhíma
and Arjuna.

Bhima serving
as cook.

Supernatural
character of Ar-
juna's disguise
as a eunuch.

The engagement of Draupadí is equally suggestive of a myth. She declared that she had been the waiting-maid of Krishna's wife, and the waiting-maid and dearest friend of Draupadí. The arrangement of her hair appears to have occasioned some

Mythical char-
acter of Drau-
padí's persona-
tion of a maid-
servant.

Extraordinary
arrangement of
her hair in con-
sequence of her
vow.

⁵ See hereafter the tradition of Nala and Damayanti, where Damayanti discovers her husband through his disguise by the flavour of his cookery.

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PART II.

Questionable
beauty.

Alleged refine-
ment of Drau-
padí's man-
ners.

Myth that the
Sun god pre-
served her from
the indignity of
a kick.

difficulty to the compiler, as she had vowed that it should never be tied up again until Bhíma's fingers were dripping with the blood of Duhsásana. After remaining dishevelled during an exile of twelve years in the jungle, it is now said to have been twisted into one string like a serpent; although it is difficult to perceive in what respect this twisting differed from tying. Again, the alleged beauty of Draupadí seems to be questionable. Supposing that she was only sixteen at the time of her marriage, the twelve years of Arjuna's exile, and the twelve years of exile in the jungle, added to the intervening period when Arjuna and his brethren were engaged in conquering the surrounding Rajas, would make her a woman of forty or forty-five years of age; a stage in life at which Oriental women generally have lost every vestige of beauty. The twelve years of Arjuna's exile, and eleven of the years of the exile of the Pándavas in the jungle, may perhaps be treated as mythical; but still it is difficult to believe that the wife of five husbands, who was also the mother of five sons, should have been endowed with such irresistible charms as those which are ascribed to the maid-servant who appears in the independent tradition of Kíshaka's amour. Moreover, the manners of Draupadí appear to have been considerably refined by her long exile. Whilst in the jungle she had hospitably offered to wash the feet of Jayadratha; but when engaged as a waiting-maid in the palace, she expressly stipulated that she should not be called upon to wash the feet of any one. It will also be remembered that the waiting-maid suffered the indignity of a kick; but the Brahmanical compilers appear to have considered

that such an affront would be derogatory to the memory of Draupadī. Accordingly it is said that the Sun god, to whom she had prayed for succour, sent down two invisible spirits who preserved her from the intended insult.⁶

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PART II.

As regards the association of the Pándavas with the story of the amour, there are many particulars introduced which serve to prove the mythical character of the connection. The statement that the teacher of dice and the head cook were sitting in Council with the Raja and his Chieftains, may be honourable to the Pándavas, but is incompatible with their position in the Raja's household. The remonstrances of Draupadī on account of the low pursuits of herself and husbands appear to be of a mythical character; and so is the reply of Bhíma in which he refers to the story of Ráma and Síta. The battle scenes are all mythical, especially Arjuna's successive combats with the different Kaurava Chieftains; but the declaration of Arjuna as he drove away from his encounter, that he would not slay a man excepting on the field of battle, and that fugitives and captives were as women in his eyes, is evidently intended to convey a moral rule which was calculated to mitigate the horrors of ancient warfare. The statement that Yudhishthira, the dice-player, was left in command of the army, whilst his brothers set off in pursuit of Susarman, is simply absurd. The crowning piece of childishness is the ridiculous quarrel between Yudhishthira and the Raja, as to whether Uttar or Arjuna had defeated the Kauravas; and it is diffi-

Mythical details
respecting the
Pándavas.

Declaration of
Arjuna as re-
gards fugitives
and captives, in-
tended as a
moral rule.

Ridiculous dis-
pute between
Yudhishthira
and Raja Viráta.

⁶ This incident is omitted in the traditionary account already given in the text, as it would only have distracted the attention of the reader; and indeed it is so clumsily introduced as to be really devoid of effect, for notwithstanding the divine interposition in her favour, Draupadī continued to complain of the kick.

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cult to choose between the foolish conceit of the Raja and the senseless obstinacy of Yudhishtira. The idea that the honour of Yudhishtira was saved because the blood from his nose did not fall upon the ground may have had some foundation in local sentiment; although the sentiment is in itself unmeaning, and no traces of it can be found in any other tradition.

Marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará treated as a myth.

The marriage of the son of Arjuna with the daughter of Raja Viráta is the salient point in the story of the thirteenth year, for it is the principal connecting link between Viráta and the Pándavas. The whole of the legend, however, evidently belongs to the Krishna group, and is altogether independent of the history of the Pándavas. The voluptuous love of women and wine, which finds full expression in the story of Kíchaka, especially connects that story with the worship of Krishna, whilst it is altogether foreign to the sentiments which appear in the traditional history of the Pándavas. Again, by accepting the tradition that the Raj of Viráta is to be fixed in Guzerat, and not in eastern Bengal, all geographical difficulties in the way of associating the tradition with the history of Krishna are at once removed, for Guzerat is the especial scene of the later adventures of Krishna. But the geographical difficulties in the way of associating the tradition with the history of the Pándavas would be as insurmountable as ever; for Viráta would still be at least six hundred miles from Hastinápur; and it is incredible that negotiations for peace, and preparations for war, should be conducted at so vast an interval. Then even the fact of the marriage of the son of

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ingly it may be inferred that the story belongs to that phase in Bráhmanical teaching, which sought to establish a higher form of worship by ridiculing the more gloomy faith which prevailed amongst the aborigines.

CHAPTER X.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

In the negotiations which were carried on after the alleged marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará, Krishna still plays a prominent part, although in no case does his presence seem necessary to the progress of the story; and this question, as to the real or mythical association of Krishna and the Pándavas, should be especially borne in mind whilst dealing with the remaining portion of the Mahá Bhárata. The history of the negotiations which preceded the great war may be best considered under four heads, as follows:—

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Questionable
character of
Krishna's sub-
sequent associa-
tion with the
Pándavas.

History of the
negotiations
which preceded
the great war
treated under
four heads.

1st, The great Council of the Pándavas and their allies at the marriage feast of Abhimanyu and Uttará.

2nd, The embassy of the Bráhmaṇ priest of Raja Drupada to the city of Hastinápura.

3rd, The embassy of Sanjaya, the charioteer of the Mahárajá, to the city of Viráta.

4th, The final mission of Krishna to the Kauravas.

The history of the negotiations commences with the first great Council of the Pándavas, on the day after the marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará. There are said to have been minor Councils in the city of Viráta, in which the Pándavas had publicly dis-

1st, Great Council of the Pándavas and their allies at the marriage feast of Abhimanyu and Uttará.

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closed who they were, and in which the marriage itself had been discussed; but on the present occasion all the allies of the Pándavas, including their father-in-law Raja Drupada, and Krishna and Balaráma, the alleged brothers-in-law of Arjuna, are said to have been present. The traditionary account of this Council may now be related as follows:—

Traditional account of the Great Council.

Now on the morning after the marriage of the son of Arjuna with the daughter of Raja Viráta, the Pándavas and all their kinsmen who had assembled in that city to celebrate the marriage, bedecked themselves with garlands and gathered together in the Court-hall. And Rajas Viráta and Drupada took their seats; and then followed Krishna and some reverend and ancient men; and then Sátyaki, the kinsman of Krishna, and Balaráma and Yudhishtira; and then the sons of Drupada, and the brothers of Yudhishtira, and the sons of Viráta, and many others whose names need not be declared.

Speech of Krishna:—"The Pándavas have now fulfilled their period of exile and desire the restoration of their rights; but before going to war, an ambassador might be sent to the Kauravas."

And when all the Chieftains were seated, Krishna addressed the Council as follows:—"All of you know how Raja Yudhishtira lost his Raj, and was sent into the wilderness by the evil machinations of Sakuni, who challenged him to the game of dice: You know too how Yudhishtira and his brethren braved the dangers of their exile, and passed twelve years openly in the wilderness, and one year secretly in this city without being discovered; and especially how they suffered during the last year, when for the sake of concealment they became servants to Raja Viráta: Now it is for you to consider what the Pándavas should do: Yudhishtira would not commit an unfair action, even though he might thereby gain the sovereignty of Indra; and he would be satisfied with a small village provided only that he had gained it by fair means: The sons of Dhritarashtra cannot subdue the Pándavas, but they are still trying by unfair means to exclude their kinsmen from the Raj of their father Pándu; yet the Pándavas bear no malice towards them, and rather than go to war would give up their

claim to the paternal share of the Raj of Bhárata, provided only that they regained those districts, in Khándava-prastha, which they conquered with their own hands: I pray you to consider well the insatiable ambition of the Kauravas, and the truthfulness of Yudhishtira, and the relationship that exists between them, and then say what is to be done: 'Two courses appear to be left open; either the Pándavas should go and slay Dhritaráshtira and his sons, or you should go and counsel Dhritaráshtira to restore to the Pándavas their rightful share of the Raj: If the Pándavas go to war, it is certain that they will come out victorious; and it therefore seems to me that we should act wisely if we sent an ambassador to counsel the Kauravas to restore half the Raj to the sons of Pándu.'

Now when Krishna had spoken, his brother, Balaráma, arose and seconded his proposition. And Balaráma said:—"It is true that the Kauravas have ill-treated the Pándavas, but it would not be wise to drive them to extremity, but rather to gain our object by peaceable means: Yudhishtira may also be said to have brought his misfortunes upon himself: He knew that he was not expert at dice, and he ought to have listened to the counsel of his elders, who tried to dissuade him from continuing in the play: But he turned a deaf ear to all their words and persisted in the game: There were hundreds of players in the court of Duryodhana who were inferior to him in skill, and he could have selected one of these and defeated him with ease; but as ill fortune would have it he chose to play with Sakuni, who was the most expert of all the players, and he would not leave off until he had lost all: Now let an eloquent man be sent to Mahárāja Dhritaráshtira to propose a treaty, and I doubt not that a treaty will be accepted, and this will be far better than going to war."

Speech of Balaráma:—"I agree with Krishna, especially as Yudhishtira by persisting in the game at dice is really the author of his own misfortunes."

Then Sátyaki, who was the kinsman of Krishna, arose and said:—"I am not surprised at your speech, O Balaráma, but still those who listened to your words cannot but be angry: How can you pronounce the victory of Duryodhana to be a just one, when he set an expert dice-player to

Speech of Sátyaki:—"I do not agree with Balaráma, and I propose war: The game was altogether a cheat, but still the Pándavas have fulfilled their engagement, and no Kshatriya should beg for that which is his right: Moreover, the Kauravas are as badly disposed towards them as ever."

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challenge Yudhishtira, who is a mere novice at the game? Had Yudhishtira been playing with his brethren in his own house, and had Duryodhana and his party come there by chance and defeated him, then the victory and defeat would have been fair: But Yudhishtira was invited to the house of Duryodhana, and there defeated with loaded dice: At this moment however Yudhishtira has fulfilled all the obligations of his defeat; why then should he go and beg of Duryodhana and his wicked Ministers? From the day his thirteenth year of exile was fulfilled, he became entitled to his ancestral rights; why then should he ask for his share of the Raj when it is his by right? Even if he were to covet the property of other people, he is bound as a Kshatriya to take it by force of arms, and never to beg for it: Moreover, how can you attribute goodwill to the Kauravas, when, notwithstanding the Pándavas have fulfilled their engagement, they still persist in saying that the sons of Pándu were discovered within the thirteenth year; and when, notwithstanding the advice of Bhíshma and Drona, they still continue to keep Yudhishtira out of his share of the Raj? Bear you all in mind that it is no sin to slay our enemies, but that it is a great disgrace and infamy to beg from them: Consider then, I pray you, what means should be adopted to restore Yudhishtira to his share of the Raj: My counsel is to let the Kauravas come forward and give peaceful possession to Yudhishtira; and if they do not so, then let us go to war."

Speech of Raja Drupada:—"I agree with Sátyaki: The influence of Duryodhana is paramount at Hastinápura, and the more submissive we are, the more arrogant he will become: Let us summon our allies, and be beforehand with the Kauravas."

Raja Drupada then said:—"What has been said by Sátyaki is true: Duryodhana will never restore the share of the Raj of his own accord: The doting Mahárajá has become a mere tool in the hands of Duryodhana; and Bhíshma and Drona must second the Mahárajá because they are poor; whilst Karna is a creature of Duryodhana, and Sakuni is an ignorant intriguer: It is therefore my opinion that the proposal of Balaráma will do no good, for Duryodhana will never be pacified by mild means; the more submissive we are the more arrogant he will prove, and will mistake mildness for want of courage: Let us therefore collect armies

and send messengers to our friends with all speed; for Duryódhana will likewise send messengers in different directions; and according to the general custom, the Rajas will side with that party whose messenger arrives first: We have many things to do, and many difficulties to encounter, so let our messengers act with promptitude, forethought, and wisdom."

Krishna then spoke a second time, as follows:—"The counsel of Raja Drupada is reasonable, and if the Pándavas are wise they will follow it: But as regards my family and myself, we are equally related to the Kauravas and Pándavas; and they have ever treated us with civility and respect: We have come here to a marriage feast, and now that the feast is over, we shall be glad to return to our own homes."

Second speech of Krishna:—"I agree with Drupada, but wish to be neutral."

Krishna then turned to Raja Drupada, and said:—"You are superior to all of us in age and wisdom; so that whatever you say regarding the welfare of the Pándavas will be acceptable to all: If Duryódhana will consent to a just treaty, very many lives will be saved: If he will not so consent, then send out your messengers, but let your messengers come to us last of all."

"If war is inevitable, let the messengers come to me last."

After this the Council broke up, and Krishna and his brother Balaráma returned to their city of Dwáráká, whilst Raja Drupada despatched his own priest to Hastinápura as envoy to the Kauravas.

Breaking up of the Council.

The proceedings of the foregoing Council call for little or no remark. It was determined to send the family priest of Raja Drupada to endeavour if possible to conclude a treaty; and meantime the Pándavas summoned all their allies far and near, and made every preparation for carrying on a war. The speech of Krishna, however, demands some explanation. It was natural and appropriate to the occasion; and so far seems to militate against the hypothesis that his traditional history is altogether independent of that of the

Review of the foregoing tradition of the Great Council.

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Mythical character of the details which associate Krishna with the Pándavas.

great war. But whilst it is admitted that on a very few occasions the introduction of Krishna may be regarded as natural and happy, yet the great mass of the details which associate him with the Pándavas bears every trace of being a series of mythical interpolations of the Brahmanical compilers who sought to deify the hero. The following account of the attempts of Duryodhana and Arjuna to win him over to their respective sides, appears to be of this mythical character, as pertaining to the worship of Krishna as a deity :—

Mythical efforts of Duryodhana and Arjuna to win over Krishna to their respective sides.

Arrogance of Duryodhana in the palace of Krishna.

Humility and reverence exhibited by Arjuna.

Duryodhana remonstrates with Krishna for speaking to Arjuna first.

Now Krishna had declared in the Council that the Kauravas and Pándavas were equally his kinsmen, but still his aid was greatly desired by both parties. So before the family priest of Drupada had reached the city of Hastinápura, Duryodhana set out with all speed to the city of Dwáraká, to gain the ear of Krishna and win him over to his cause; and when the Pándavas heard of his journey they despatched Arjuna on a like errand. Now it so happened that Duryodhana and Arjuna arrived at Dwáraká on the same day, but Duryodhana presented himself at the palace gate before the other, and was told by the door-keeper that Krishna was asleep; and Duryodhana, in his haughtiness and pride at being the lord of Indra-prastha, as well as that of Hastinápura, entered the chamber of Krishna, and sat down at the head of the bed. Presently Arjuna arrived at the palace, but he regarded Krishna with all respect and reverence, and seated himself at Krishna's feet, with his hands clasped in a posture of submission. Now when Krishna awoke from his slumber, his eye fell upon Arjuna, and he saluted him, and asked him if all was well, and inquired the purpose of his coming. But before Arjuna could vouchsafe a reply, Duryodhana, without waiting to be spoken to, said :—"I and my brethren are preparing to make war, and desire your assistance with a large body of soldiers; and since I and Arjuna bear the same relationship to you,

Krishna's ex-
cuses.

Offer of Krishna.

Arjuna decides
to take Krishna
singly.Duryodhana
elects to have
Krishna's army.Balarâma re-
fuses to take any
part in the war.

it is but fair for you to regard us both in the same light, and not give him the preference over me: Moreover, I have come to you first, and you need not be told that it is the rule with men of exalted rank to notice that man first who first waits upon them." Krishna replied:—"You are quite right in saying that you came here first, but if on my awaking my eye fell upon Arjuna, and I spoke to him, do not let this cause you any uneasiness, for you are both to me as my two eyes: Besides, Arjuna is young, and you are more advanced in years, and it is generally right to bring the younger men forward by a little encouragement." So Duryodhana was appeased, and recovered his good humour; and Krishna then continued to speak to both Duryodhana and Arjuna as follows:—"I will put myself alone into one scale, and all the warriors of my army into the other scale, and you are welcome to take your choice between the two: But if you take me, remember that I shall not fight, though I will give counsel." Then Arjuna held out his hands and said:—"I at once decide upon taking your single self, for whether you go with arms or without, and whether you fight or do not fight, your presence will so fortify our hearts, that it will be worth a hundred thousand armies." But Duryodhana elected to have Krishna's army in preference to Krishna's self, and thought within himself, what comparison is there between a single man and thousands of heroes. And Krishna saw what was in the mind of Duryodhana, and said:—"I make over to you all my army." So Duryodhana went to the palace of Balarâma and told him all that had taken place, saying:—"I came hither to forestall the aid of Krishna, and he has given me every satisfaction, and has appointed you, with all his forces, to abet my cause." Balarâma replied:—"While we were at the city of Matsya, I made many representations to Krishna in your behalf, and that of the Kauravas, but he would not listen to my words, and gave me no reply: Wherefore, I have no heart for this war, and shall take no part in it: You yourself know that you have wronged the Pândavas, and that it is the duty of men to do justice and right; and if you strive to fulfil

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Krishna promises to drive the chariot of Arjuna in the forthcoming war.

Improbability of the legend, but religious significance of the myth.

Story of Sálya, Raja of Madra, deserting the Pándavas, but engaging to drive the chariot of Karna in his combat with Arjuna.

your duty, you will obtain a well-earned reputation." With these words Balaráma embraced Duryodhana, and Duryodhana took his leave, and returned with Krishna's army to his own city. Meantime Krishna expressed his great surprise that Arjuna should have chosen him after he had pledged himself not to fight; but Arjuna answered:—"Although you will not join us in the battle, yet if you will but drive my chariot I am assured of victory." So Krishna gave his promise that he would drive the chariot of Arjuna, and Arjuna returned to his brethren in great joy.

The improbability of the foregoing story is apparent. Hastinápur is seven hundred miles from Dwáraká as the crow flies; and the whole narrative is altogether incompatible with the narrative of Krishna's final mission to the Kauravas, which will appear hereafter. But the religious significance of the myth is obvious. It teaches that the presence of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu is of greater service to his worshippers than a thousand armies of mortal men; and the faith and reverence of Arjuna are favourably contrasted with the utter want of either faith or reverence which was exhibited by Duryodhana.

Whilst Duryodhana was returning to Hastinápur another incident is said to have taken place, which may be very briefly indicated. Sálya, Raja of Madra, and brother of the second wife of Pándu, had set out to join the Pándavas; but he was met by Duryodhana, and induced by an artifice to side with the Kauravas. The story is obscure and of small importance, excepting that when Sálya subsequently excused himself to the Pándavas for having changed sides, he pledged himself to drive the chariot of Karna, and secretly do his best to ensure the defeat

of Karna, in the combat which appeared to be inevitable between that warrior and Arjuna.

The history of the second event in the negotiations of this period, namely, the embassy of the family priest of Drupada to the Kauravas of Hastinapur, possesses considerable historical value, inasmuch as it furnishes some significant illustrations of the rude outspoken oratory of the patriarchal age, when the art of writing was apparently unknown, and letters were sent by word of mouth. The story of the embassy may be related as follows:—

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2nd. Embassy of the family priest of Drupada to Hastinapur.

Illustrative of the patriarchal period prior to the age of writing.

Now after Duryodhana had returned to Hastinapur, the Bráhman Envoy from Raja Drupada reached the city, and Mahárajá Dhritaráshtṛa called together his Council, and duly inquired of the Bráhman respecting the health of the Pándavas and Raja Viráta, and gave suitable replies to the same inquiries which were made by the Envoy. The Bráhman then spoke to the Kauravas, and other Chieftains that were in the Council, as follows:—"An Envoy is the tongue of the party by whom he is sent; and if he fails in the discharge of his trust, and does not faithfully repeat his master's words, he is guilty of an act of treachery: Have I therefore your permission to repeat the message sent by the Pándavas?" The whole Council exclaimed:—"Speak plainly the words of the Pándavas without extenuation and without aggravation." Then the Bráhman spoke as follows:—"The Pándavas send their salutations and speak thus: 'Raja Dhritaráshtṛa and Raja Pándu were brothers, as all men know; why then should the sons of Dhritaráshtṛa inherit the whole Raj, whilst the sons of Pándu are shut out? You, Duryodhana, from the time of your childhood up to this day, have taken every opportunity to injure us: You caused false dice to be made, and then invited us to a gambling match, in which we played with you in all simplicity; and you then by foul play dispossessed us of all we had, and compelled us to wander about like vagabonds for twelve years, and then

Tradition of the embassy sent to the Kauravas.

Council summoned to receive the Bráhman.

Preliminary courtesies.

The Bráhman requests permission to repeat the words of the Pándavas.

The message sent by the Pándavas.

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Demand for the
restoration of
the half of the
Raj.

Reply of Bhish-
ma.

Karna's wrath-
ful remon-
strances with
Bhishma for
praising Arjuna.

"The Pándavas
have only them-
selves to blame
for their losses
by gambling."

Karna's message
to the Pándavas:
—"The Pándav-
as were dis-
covered before
the thirteenth
year was over,
and must go
again into exile."

to keep ourselves in perfect concealment for one year longer: All these conditions are now fulfilled, and if you will restore us to our rightful share of the Raj, we are ready to forget all the sufferings and wrongs we have endured; but if you reject our rightful claims, the blood of all the slain will be upon your head; and rest assured that Arjuna alone will devour your armies as a fowl devours the grain.'"

Bhishma then took up the discourse, and thus spoke to the Bráhmaṇ:—"All that you have said appears to be just and reasonable, but in boasting of the valour of Arjuna you have said too much: Arjuna may, and perchance does, deserve all the praises you have bestowed upon him, but I warn you not to repeat them in our presence."

Karna then spoke out in great wrath, and said:—"This Envoy has right on his side when he magnifies the pretensions of those who sent him; but what has come to you, O Bhishma, that you should bestow such praises upon Arjuna, and make common cause with him? As for the Pándavas they can only sue for peace; for after wandering twelve years in the jungle without power and without followers, what else can they do? And if they have endured hardships and vexations, can they reproach us for what they lost by gambling, when they brought all their sufferings upon themselves? And now that they pretend by means of the power of Raja Drupada and Raja Viráta to take from us the half of the Raj, let them know that Raja Duryodhana will make a free gift of all his Raj, even to his enemy, provided that enemy has a right to it; but that he will not yield up a foot of land to those who have no claim to it, how much soever he may be threatened: And now what imbecility have the Pándavas discovered in our management of affairs that they should fly so high in their pretensions?"

Karna then turned round to the Envoy, and said:—"Go you and say to the Pándavas:—"Whereas you were seen and recognized in the thirteenth year, and thereby broke the conditions agreed upon between us, go now and again wander in the jungle for twelve years more, and conceal yourselves for the thirteenth year, and then come hither and

appear before Raja Duryodhana, and humbly and submissively entreat him to give you the half of the Raj, and there will then be no unwillingness or delay upon his side in acceding to your prayer: You come forward now in the name of uprightness; why then do you strive to excite a war by your own bad faith and breach of engagement, and talk as if we were the promise-breakers and unjust party? If you go to war with us you will surely have cause to repent.' "

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Bhishma then replied to the words of Karna, as follows:—"On that day when you and the other warriors had driven off the cattle of Raja Virata, and Arjuna came and defeated you, why did you not then give utterance to all these boastings? Let me, however, whisper in your ear that Arjuna is the same now as then, and if the quarrel breaks out again, Arjuna will trample down all your glory into the dust, and turn day into night in your eyes."

Bhishma threatens that Arjuna will conquer Karna.

Here the blind Mahárája excused Karna to Bhishma, and said to Bhishma:—"Karna is as a son to you, and is very young, and does not understand all the niceties of expression; so be not offended with him." And the Mahárája turned to Karna, and said:—"Bhishma is a most humane and friendly man, and all that he says is intended for our good and advantage: Why, then, do you revile Arjuna and the other Pándavas, and fall foul of Bhishma at every turn? As regards the propositions of peace which the Pándavas have offered, Bhishma looks upon them with a favourable eye, and I also am no less satisfied with them."

The Mahárája tries to appease Bhishma and Karna, and declares in favour of peace.

Then the Mahárája, by and with the consent of his Council, sent Sanjaya, who was both his Minister and Charioteer, on an embassy to the Pándavas, accompanied by the family priest of Raja Drupada.

The Mahárája sends an embassy to the Pándavas.

The foregoing tradition of the embassy of the Bráhmaṇ priest to Hastinápura seems to furnish some insight into the primitive forms of diplomacy which were observed in patriarchal times. Although the question to be decided was one of peace or war, the preliminary courtesies were duly observed of inter-

Review of the foregoing tradition of the embassy of the family priest of Drupada to the Kauravas.

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changing inquiries respecting the health and well-being of the respective parties. The Envoy then requested permission to repeat the message as he had received it from those who had sent him; and this may have been a wise precaution, as it tended to avert from himself the wrath which might have fallen upon him as the utterer of hostile and opprobrious language. The quarrel between the patriarchal Bhíshma and the upstart Karna is not very intelligible; but it subsequently found full expression at the election of a Commander-in-Chief at the breaking out of the great war. The reference to the thirteenth year seems to indicate that the Kauravas were of opinion that the Pándavas had not fulfilled the engagement into which they had entered at the gambling match. The point, however, was never settled, and therefore calls for no further remark.

3rd, Embassy of
Sanjaya to the
Pándavas.

The third stage in the history of the negotiations now remains for consideration, namely, the embassy of Sanjaya, the Minister and Charioteer of the Mahárajá, to the Pándavas. The proceedings of this embassy are highly significant. Sanjaya is evidently the type of an ancient diplomatist. His object was to induce the Pándavas to return to Hastinápura, without giving them any distinct pledge that their Raj would be restored to them. The history of his mission may be related as follows:—

Traditional account of the embassy.
Diplomatic qualifications of Sanjaya.

Now Sanjaya was the Charioteer and Minister of Mahárajá Dhritaráshtra, and he was almost without an equal in understanding, and in knowledge, and in diplomacy, and he had everywhere very many friends and acquaintances. And the Mahárajá said to Sanjaya:—"I hear that the Pándavas are in the Raj of Viráta: So go to them, and first salute

them all from us, and greet each one of them as my most beloved son, and then deliver to them all our message as follows :—“ Dhritarishtra and the elders of the Kauravas speak thus :—‘ You five brothers are of such good account for your commendable qualities and amiable manners, that every friend and every enemy is alike loud in exalting you; and you have now tasted both the pains and the pleasures of the world, and experienced the realities of evil, as well as those of good: It is our wish that all quarrels and discussions between kinsmen should cease, and that perfect peace should be established between the Kauravas and you; and however harsh Duryodhana, and Karna, and the younger Kauravas may appear to you, and however much they may display the pride and strength of youth, and seem to prefer the chances of war, yet if you will come before me I will settle peace between you: Except the vicious Duryodhana, and the narrow-minded Karna, no one on our side is at heart against the Pándavas.’ ”

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Message of the
Maharaja to the
Pándavas.

So Sanjaya and the Bráhmaṇ, who was family priest of Raja Drupada, proceeded together to the city where the Pándavas were dwelling; and when they arrived there they found armies encamped upon the plains, and in the jungle, and on the mountains, and on the banks of rivers, as numerous as the waves of the sea. And Sanjaya was stricken with wonder at beholding all this military pomp arrayed on the side of the Pándavas; and he went on to the Council house of Raja Yudhishtira, and paid his respects in due form. And Raja Yudhishtira and all the assembly rejoiced at the arrival of Sanjaya, and returned him all suitable compliments, and inquired after their friends and kinsmen; to which Sanjaya gave appropriate replies. Raja Yudhishtira then said to Sanjaya :—“ Krishna, and Raja Viráta, and Raja Drupada, and other Rajas are here present, so do you now declare your message.” Sanjaya then delivered the message which had been intrusted to him by the Mahárajá, and he also said :—“ Among all people there is entire confidence in both the Kauravas and the Pándavas, and it is a shame to both that there should be any dissensions between

Sanjaya reaches
the camp of the
Pándavas, and
is surprised at
the greatness of
their prepara-
tions for war.

The Pándavas
receive the am-
bassador in
Council.

Sanjaya delivers
his message.

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them, when all the world would rejoice to see them mutually serviceable to each other: Now that all the principal Rajas are gathered together, they should so act as to put an end to discord."

Reply of Yudhishtira:—
"We are anxious to avoid a war, but the Mahárája is trying to entrap us to Hastinápur with mere offers of protection, without promising to restore our share of the Raj."

Raja Yudhishtira then replied to the Envoy as follows:—
"Whosoever is wise will never give his consent to a war on any trivial grounds, nor suffer so many souls to be slain, and the whole Raj thrown into confusion, without absolute necessity, especially when both parties are friends and kinsmen: But when peace cannot be attained, and war seems inevitable, it would be useless in us to humiliate ourselves to the dust for the sake of concord: We are disinclined to war, but it is out of sympathy for our own people; and because the Raj would be of little profit or comfort to us after the slaughter of our friends and kinsmen: He, however, who is intent upon a war of malice is always in a fever, and the fever burns stronger and stronger in his heart day by day, until he can feel no pleasure in the ordinary gratifications of the world: Now we know not what offence we have given to Karna, that he should ever be on the alert for our death and perdition, and ever be speaking evil of us to Duryodhana, and kindling a fire in his own mind against us: As for Dhritaráshtira, we acknowledge him to be our Mahárája, and we know that he is kind and benevolent, and averse to doing evil and working mischief: But for the sake of humouring his son Duryodhana, and keeping on good terms with him, the Mahárája stoops to act deceitfully towards us, and would entrap us into his presence by mere offers of protection: Then, again, Vidura is the general well-wisher, and earnest for our good; but however much advice he may give, it is all thrown away, both upon Duryodhana and his doting father Dhritaráshtira, though he speak the truth ever so clearly."

Reply of Krishna:—"The Pándavas have been put to such expenses in preparing for this war, that they have no alternative but to demand their half share of the Raj."

Krishna then spoke thus to Sanjaya:—"I am equally desirous for the welfare of both the Kauravas and Pándavas; but what can I do when the Mahárája prefers the immediate gratification of his son to all other considerations? Yudhishtira and his brethren have always expressed a desire

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own settlements :¹ And we five brothers, for the sake of peace, will be content with this small portion, and will be on good terms with Duryodhana : The desire of my heart is that there should be no war, and that I and my brethren should live once more in peace and happiness together, and be reconciled to all our kinsmen ; and that our relatives who have come here to assist us may go back uninjured : But I am prepared for both war and peace, and I can be either hostile or friendly, according as events may transpire."

Sanjaya delivers his messages to the Mahārāja.

Anxious conversation throughout the night between the Mahārāja and Vidura.

The Kauravas summoned to a Council, at which Sanjaya delivers his messages.

Agreement impossible.

4th. Mission of Krishna to the Kauravas.

Sanjaya having been thus instructed by Yudhishtira returned to the city of Hastināpur, and arrived at the palace of the Mahārāja and made known his coming. And the Mahārāja sent for him to a private apartment, and heard all that the Pāndavas had said, and then dismissed him and sent his door-keeper to call Vidura ; and that whole night the Mahārāja and Vidura passed in deep discourse by themselves upon the tidings brought by Sanjaya. And when it was morning the Mahārāja summoned all his sons and kinsmen to Council, and despatched a messenger to bring Sanjaya, who thereupon entered the Council-hall and spoke as follows :—" Raja Yudhishtira sends respectful greeting to all the elders, and a friendly embrace to all the young men, and his blessing to the striplings and children." Sanjaya then delivered the message of Krishna, and the private message from Yudhishtira ; and a great discussion arose in which the elders counselled peace and the younger men clamoured for war : and seeing that it was impossible that they could come to an agreement, no reply whatever was despatched to the Pāndavas.

The fourth and final stage in the history of the negotiations now remains for consideration, namely, the mission of Krishna to Hastināpur. The whole of this portion of the narrative appears to be myth-

¹ The names of the districts are given in the original, but it is difficult to say how far they are mythical. Probably they referred to five farms or gardens in the country of Khāndava-prastha, but the name of one of these districts is Vāranāvata, which is the modern Allāhabād ; and the mythical character of the references to this city has already been shown in the story of the alleged plot of the Kauravas to burn the house in which the Pāndavas were residing.

ical; but yet it possesses much historical value, inasmuch as it illustrates to a remarkable degree the spirit in which the Mahá Bhárata was composed, and the conception which the Brahmanical compilers had formed of Krishna, as a mediator as well as of an incarnation of the Supreme Being. The legend may be related as follows:—

Now when many days had passed away, and the Pándavas received no reply to the messages they had sent by Sanjaya, Yudhishtira went to Krishna, and said:—"What are we to do? I have solicited the Kauravas for peace, and would have been content if they had spared us our five villages; but they have sent us no reply to our messages; and now I am in great want, and cannot relieve the distress of my mother and brethren." And Krishna said that he would go himself on an embassy to the Mahárajá, and Yudhishtira entreated him to bring about a peace; but Draupadí came in and threw herself at the feet of Krishna and said:—"Yudhishtira has sent too many supplications to the Kauravas, and has asked for only five villages, as though the right were on their side: But if you are to arbitrate between them, I pray you to remember that an arbitrator must not speak of inferiority; and if the Kauravas will make war upon the Pándavas, my five husbands, and my father and brethren, and many others, will enter the lists against them: Remember how the Kauravas treated me from the very first; how they seized me by the hair and dragged me to the ground, in the midst of the assembly." So saying, Draupadí burst into tears, and Krishna's heart melted within him, and he kindly said to her:—"Why do you weep? The time has nearly come when the Kauravas will be slain, both small and great, and when their wives will weep as you are doing now."

Legend of the mission.

Yudhishtira applies to Krishna for counsel.

Krishna offers to go as ambassador to Hastinapur.

Yudhishtira's desire for peace. Remonstrances of Draupadí.

Krishna comforts Draupadí.

After this Krishna selected a prosperous moment in the month Kartika for setting out on his mission to Hastinapur; and having bathed and worshipped the sun and fire, he went his way. And Yudhishtira and his brethren, and Rajas

Krishna proceeds to Hastinapur.

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Sends on messengers to announce his arrival.

Vidura counsels Duryodhana to give Krishna a grand reception.

Great preparations commenced by Duryodhana.

Vidura urges that the reception is useless unless Duryodhana is prepared to restore the five villages to the Pándavas.

Viráta and Drupada, and many others, accompanied Krishna some distance on his way; and when they took leave of him, Yudhishtira and his brethren especially entreated that he would comfort their mother, Kuntí, who was still residing in the house of Vidura. Krishna then proceeded on his journey until he came to a spot nigh unto the city of Hastinápur; and he halted there, and sent on messengers to announce his arrival to the Kauravas, and to say that he would be with them on the morrow. When Vidura heard the words of the messengers, he took them with him into the presence of Duryodhana, and said:—"In all the streets and market-places there is a great stir amongst high and low; all saying that Krishna is come hither on an embassy from the Pándavas: You ought therefore to assemble all your brethren and Chieftains, and go forth to meet him, so that you may conciliate him by your respect, and have the applause of all the people." Then Duryodhana called together all his Chieftains and Ministers, and caused handsome carpets to be spread for Krishna to walk upon, and ordered all the handsomest of his servants to put on festival garments and to wait upon Krishna with sandal wood and perfumes; and he sent word to his father, the Mahárāja, that Krishna was coming; and Dhritarashtra ordered that every mark of honour should be observed in the reception of such an illustrious guest. Then Duryodhana prepared to go out with all his brethren and children to meet Krishna on foot; and orders were proclaimed throughout the city that all the women of the inner apartments, who desired to see Krishna, should be permitted to behold him from the walls and tops of houses; and all the shopkeepers decorated their shops and put on festival garments; and the palace of Duhsāsana, which was the best in Hastinápur, was set apart for the lodging of Krishna.

Then Vidura praised Duryodhana for the preparations which he had made to do honour to Krishna. And Vidura said:—"This magnificent reception however is of small moment unless you are prepared to restore the five villages to the Pándavas." And Duryodhana replied:—"I will not

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abandons his
preparations
and proposes
putting Krishna
into custody.Remonstrances
of the Mahá-
raja.Wrath of Bhish-
ma.Krishna enters
the city, and is
received by all
the Kauravas
excepting
Duryodhana.Haughtiness of
Duryodhana to-
wards Krishna.Krishna resides
in the house of
Vidura, where
Kunti is dwell-
ing.Affecting inter-
view with
Kunti.

give to the Pándavas as much land as could be carried on the head of a pin, unless I am compelled by war; and if Krishna is only come to further the claim of the Pándavas, we need not throw away our efforts for naught, but receive him as an ordinary ambassador; for otherwise he will say that the Kauravas are terrified and trying to propitiate me: Moreover, if the Pándavas are thus dependent upon Krishna, let us keep him here in close custody; and by so doing clip the wings of our enemies." But the Mahárajá cried out:—"Beware how you give way to such evil thoughts, for it would be a lasting disgrace to any Raja to put an ambassador into custody, and especially an ambassador so illustrious as Krishna." And Bhíshma turned to the Mahárajá, and said:—"This son of yours appears to think of nothing but war and mischief; and I fear that his ruin is not far off, and that his disgrace will fall upon all of us." So saying, Bhíshma rose up and went to his own house; and Vidura was much disturbed, and he rose up in like manner and went out with Bhíshma.

When it was morning Krishna bathed himself, and performed his religious duty, and then set out for the city of Hastinápur. And when he came nigh to the city, all the Kauravas, small and great, save Duryodhana only, went forth on foot to meet him; and all the men and women, young and old, came out of their apartments to see Krishna and pay him reverence. And Krishna spoke to every one with civility, and when he came to the palace of the Mahárajá he sat down for a while; and presently Duryodhana came up, and barely noticed Krishna, and Krishna knew what was passing in the mind of Duryodhana from the haughtiness of his manner, and because of his not having been present with the others to meet him without the city. So after a while Krishna left the palace of the Mahárajá and went to the house of Vidura; and Vidura made many particular inquiries of him respecting the Pándavas; and when Krishna had answered every question, he went into the inner apartments, and saw his father's sister Kuntí, and took her in his arms, whilst she burst into tears, for her

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Krishna comforts Kuntí with the assurance that her sons will conquer.

Krishna's visit to Duryodhana.

Refuses to partake of the entertainment prepared by Duryodhana.

Declares that there can be no friendship between them unless Duryodhana comes to terms with the Pándavas.

heart was yearning towards her sons the Pándavas. And Kuntí said:—"It is now fourteen years since my sons left me bathed in tears, and I have heard of all the distresses they have gone through: Tell me now if all is well with them, and what has become of Draupadí; and how she has borne up under poverty and exile: And who shall tell of my own wretchedness, for from the time of my birth until this hour I have not passed a single day in comfort; and when I had hoped to get some solace from my sons, they have been driven away from jungle to jungle, and from village to village, whilst I have been left alone amongst this tribe of Kauravas, without any respite from their wickedness and obstinacy." Then Krishna comforted Kuntí, and he secretly said to her:—"Be of good cheer! Wherever your sons have been they have overthrown their enemies, and gained many friends; and the day of their prosperity is very near, when they shall overthrow the Kauravas, and recover possession of their own Raj."

When Krishna had comforted Kuntí, he went to the palace of Duryodhana, and it was very splendid, and contained everything that was conducive to luxury and pleasure. And Duryodhana was seated upon his throne in all the pride and wealth of a great Raja, and took but small notice of Krishna. But a golden seat had been prepared for Krishna, and Duryodhana presently ordered a quantity of fruits and perfumes and much betel to be brought-in; after which there was a great entertainment of victuals and liquors, but Krishna would not taste a single morsel. And Duryodhana asked him why he had no relish for such things, and Krishna answered:—"If a man enters the house of another, and partakes of his meal, there is either friendly discourse between the host and his guest, or else a needy guest is under the influence of his host: But there are no such relations between you and me; for I am on no terms of friendship with you, nor am I a needy guest who wants a meal." Duryodhana said:—"You may not be in want of a feast, but why have you no friendship for me?" Krishna replied:—"There can be no friendship between us unless

you come to terms with the Pándavas: Besides, an ambassador may not take a meal in the house of him to whom he is sent, unless he has completed his business to his own satisfaction: Moreover, it seems to me that you must have some bad motive in insisting upon my taking food here; so I am resolved to eat nothing in your house, but to go to the house of Vidura, and there take what I think best." So saying, Krishna arose and went to the house of Vidura, followed by Bhíshma, Drona, Kripa, and many others, who severally requested him to come to their houses, saying:—"Since you have left the house of Duryodhana, you can have no objection to come to us." But Krishna excused himself, saying:—"If I visit any one of you, another may be offended, and I am satisfied with all of you; so it will be better that I go at once to the house of Vidura." And Krishna did as he had said, and Vidura entertained him with all due respect and honour.

Returns to the house of Vidura, and declines all other invitations.

And Vidura said to Krishna:—"You should not have troubled to come to Hastinápur: Duryodhana is ever proud and obstinate, but now his arrogance will be at the highest pitch at the thought that Krishna has come to wait upon him; and he is a man of that haughtiness that he cannot conceive that any one should pretend to advise him, but considers that all he says should pass for law which no man should dispute." Krishna replied:—"What you say is very true, but I desired to see with my own eyes, and I hoped that the tie of relationship would have enabled me to preserve the Kauravas from destruction: I am convinced now that their downfall is at hand, yet I will once more give my advice in the presence of them all in Council, and then if they will listen to me it will be well, but if they are deaf to my words, they must take their own course."

Vidura's objections to Krishna's visit to Hastinápur.

Krishna's explanations.

The next morning when Krishna had bathed, and worshipped the sun, all the Bráhmans and eulogists that were in the city of Hastinápur came to his door with blessings and praises, and he rewarded them all with handsome gifts. Presently all the Chieftains in the city came to wait upon him, and last of all came Duryodhana, Karna, and Sakuni.

Reverence paid to Krishna by the people of Hastinápur.

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Krishna addresses the Mahárája as the mouth-piece of the Pándavas, who pray for a restoration of their share of the Raj.

former times : The Pándavas lost their father in their infancy, and you brought them up as your own sons ; then do you cherish them now, and not make a sacrifice of virtue by rejecting this counsel.

“ What I have hitherto said to you has been of my own accord, but as the mouth-piece of the Pándavas I now speak to you thus :—‘ We, the Pándavas, greet you, and look upon you as our father, and now in like manner do you regard us as your sons : In obedience to your command we have passed twelve miserable years in the wilderness and one year in disguise ; and all the Bráhmans in your Court know that we have faithfully passed through the ordeal, and stand now freed from all our promises : O Mahárája, do you now so act that we may regain the share of the Raj to which we are entitled : It is for you to decide whether it is us, or the Kauravas, who are in the wrong.’ ”

Speech of Krishna to the Council generally :—“ A Minister is responsible for the acts of the Mahárája, and counsellors are bound to prevent the Mahárája from doing wrong.”

Krishna then turned to the whole Council, and said :—“ To the Rajas and Chieftains here assembled, I am directed by the Pándavas to speak as follows :—‘ It is an evil thing that an act of injustice should be committed by a Mahárája, who is assisted by such virtuous Counsellors and Ministers : A Minister is responsible for the acts of the Mahárája ; and it is the duty of all good and wise Counsellors to prevent the Mahárája from performing any vicious deed : Never fear speaking the truth even if unpalatable, and never fear offending the Mahárája by telling him that he is in the wrong : Do you now advise him what course he should pursue on the present occasion.’ ”

Krishna's final request to the Mahárája.

Krishna then turned to the Mahárája, and said :—“ O Mahárája, I as an Ambassador can say no more : I have done my duty by asking you for the share of the Raj to which the Pándavas are entitled, and by counselling you to conclude a treaty : Let your Counsellors advise you upon the matter, and if you consider my advice to be just and virtuous, do you act accordingly, and save all these Rajas and Chieftains here assembled from the grasp of death : O Chief of the race of Bhárata, be pacified and do not give way to wrath ! Give the Pándavas their ancestral share of

the Raj, and rule the remainder in peace and tranquillity with your sons and grandsons: As for the Pándavas they are equally prepared, whether it be for peace or whether it be for war."

Reply of the Mahárajá that Krishna had better counsel Duryodhana.

When Krishna had finished, the Mahárajá replied to him, as follows:—"All that you have said is true and pleasant to hear; but I am not free, and consequently I cannot perform what I wish: Seek therefore to counsel Duryodhana rather than me; for he is violent and disobedient, and refuses to listen to the advice of his mother Gándhárí, or to the pious Vidura, or to the wise Bhíshma; and if you can move my wicked son, you will be acting like a friend, and I shall be greatly obliged to you."

Advice of Krishna to Duryodhana.

Then Krishna turned to Duryodhana, and gave the same counsel to him as he had given to the Mahárajá. But Duryodhana was obstinate and said nothing, and Bhíshma spoke to him thus:—"O Duryodhana, do you follow the advice of Krishna; it will be good for you both in this world and in the next, and if you act otherwise there will be no peace, but all-destroying war: You are wicked, vicious, cowardly, and the pest of the family of Kauravas: You glory in violating the commands of your father, and in despising the counsels of Krishna and Vidura: It is on account of your tyrannical conduct that your father suffers so much misery, and is about to lose his Raj: Your pride will cost the lives of all your friends, brethren, and kinsmen: But be advised, my child, and do not make your parents wretched for ever."

Strong remonstrances of Bhíshma.

When Duryodhana heard these words of Bhíshma, he was exceedingly wroth, and began to breathe very hard; and Drona went up to him, and said:—"All that Krishna and Bhíshma have said to you is for your own good, and I pray you to follow their counsel, for they are wise, intelligent, experienced, and virtuous: Indeed all who dissuade you from this war are your true friends, and those who counsel you to it are your worst enemies, who will most assuredly forsake you in the hour of peril, and leave you to bear the whole brunt of the contest: But I perceive that

Exasperation of Duryodhana.

Remonstrances of Drona.

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Custom of warriors to abuse each other prior to fighting.

Abusive character of the present challenges.

challenges between the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It should here be remarked that it was the custom amongst the ancient warriors to abuse each other in exaggerating language prior to engaging in combat; probably with the view of exciting their enmity against each other to the highest possible pitch before coming to close quarters. It will now be seen that the challenges between the rival armies partook very much of this exasperating character. Instead of a formal declaration of a war, accompanied perhaps by a solemn appeal to the God of battles, as is customary with more civilized nations, the messages which were interchanged by these rude warriors were couched in the barbarous but outspoken language of anger and hatred; and as such, are strikingly illustrative of that uncultivated stage of moral development when men delight in provoking the wrath of their enemies, and regard revenge as a duty and moderation as a crime. The legend of this interchange of challenges may be thus narrated :—

Duryodhana sends a kinsman with a challenge to the Pándavas.

Language of the challenge.

Now when the armies on both sides were prepared for battle, Duryodhana called one of his kinsmen to carry a challenge to the Pándavas according to the custom. So the kinsman went to the Pándavas, and said :—“ You have sworn, O Pándavas, that when your exile was expired you would come out to war against us; and the time has now arrived when you should fulfil your oath : You have been deprived of your Raj, and your wife Draupadí has been grievously insulted, and you yourselves have been driven into exile : Why then do you sit unconcerned, when you ought to rush into war with your hearts on fire ? Where is the sleepy Bhíma that threatened to drink the blood of Duhsásana ? Lo Duhsásana is here, but where is Bhíma ? Where too is the presumptuous Arjuna, who thought to

drive his fist at Drona, and who shocked us by expecting that the pupil would get the better of his preceptor? Perchance when Mount Sumara is levelled with the dust, and the earth rises above it, and men catch the wind with their fingers, Arjuna may take Drona prisoner, but not before then: But we are assured that whoever comes out to battle against Bhishma or Drona, be he man or elephant, will never escape with his life; and though you are our brethren and kinsmen, and have lived amongst us, yet you know nothing of our prowess; like the frog who dwells in a river and knows nothing of the caves beneath it: And although Arjuna prides himself on the protection of Krishna, and relies on his bow as long as a palmira tree, yet to obtain a Raj, men should have good fortune as well as strength, and of what use was the bow of Arjuna and the mace of Bhima on the day of the gambling match when you staked yourselves to become our slaves? If Krishna were a thousand times as strong as he is, and Arjuna ten thousand times, they could not cope with us, nor match themselves with us on the field of battle."

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At this message from the Kauravas, the Pandavas were so violently incensed that nothing could exceed their wrath. Bhima looked towards Krishna, and said to his brethren:—"Where Krishna is present, it is not becoming of me to appear presumptuous, but I know full well what answer I would give to this contemptible fellow." Krishna then said to the messenger:—"You, who all boast so proudly, and presume to despatch such a message to a camp where I am present, will soon behold what will befall your own lives, and the lives of all your armies, from the power and majesty of Yudhishtira, and the strength and skill of Arjuna, whom you regard so lightly: Just as fire burns up dry grass will I consume your armies, and when I am mounted on the driving-seat of Arjuna's chariot, Duryodhana may mount up to the highest heaven or go down to the lowest hell, but he shall ever see my face urging Arjuna's chariot full against him: And as for the sneering message Duryodhana has sent to Bhima, because he vowed to drink the

Extreme wrath
of the Pandavas.

Bhima's refer-
ence to Krishna.

Mythical reply
sent by Krishna
to the Kauravas.

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Duhsāsana, I regard his vow as already fulfilled, for certain it is that he will perform all that he has said : On the morrow Yudhishtira, and Arjuna, and Bhīma, will display their prowess in the presence of all ; they are not, as you are, prone to arrogant boastings ; but they will prove by their deeds on the field of battle what they can do.”

Arjuna's reply
to the challenge.

When Krishna had finished, Arjuna spoke thus to the messenger :—“ Whatever may be said, or whatever may be done, there should be no boasting of valour : But say these words to Duryodhana :—‘ If you be a man speak for yourself, and do not brag of the valour of Bhīshma or of Drona, for such conduct is only befitting in women : Had you been a man you would have spoken of yourself, and if you only send Drona and Bhīshma to the field, you had better put a veil upon your head and remain with the women : Bhīshma is our father, and he is lord of us as well as of you ; and Drona is our tutor ; therefore I shall not draw the sword against the face of either, unless either attack me ; but let Duryodhana come himself to the field, and try my prowess : As for Duhsāsana being in the army of the Kauravas, I am glad of it, for he is a disgrace wherever he is ; and whatever may be the army in which he takes his stand, that army will never behold the face of victory : Go now and tell Duryodhana all that you have heard.”

Replies of
Krishna and Ar-
juna carried to
the Kauravas.

So the messenger went his way, and told to Duryodhana and the Kauravas all that had been said ; and Karna cried out :—“ I have no patience with this peddling talk ! We must now think of war, and messengers must be sent to all our armies that all may be ready when the drums beat on the morrow.” And Duryodhana did as Karna had said.

Foregoing
legend rendered
dubious by the
references to
Krishna.

The force of the foregoing legend is somewhat weakened by the references to Krishna, and the introduction of Krishna's speech, which are evidently foreign to the main story. Indeed, the speech of Krishna is so palpably mythical and superfluous as to render comment almost unnecessary. In the original tradition the message of Arjuna no doubt

Message of
Krishna palp-
ably mythical.
Message of Ar-
juna probably
the only one sent
to the challenge
of Duryodhana.

formed the sole and appropriate answer to the insulting challenge of Duryodhana; for it is difficult to believe that the weak and bombastic language of Krishna could possibly have found a place in the Kshatriya story before it fell into the hands of the Brahmanical compilers.

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The next event which preceded the breaking out of hostilities was the alleged agreement of both Kauravas and Pándavas to certain rules, which tended greatly to ameliorate the savage character of ancient war. The legend of this significant agreement may be thus related:—

4th, Rules agreed to on both sides for ameliorating the horrors of the coming war.

Now at the same time that the messenger left the assembly of the Pándavas, Raja Yudhishtira said:—"War is now close upon us, and we must appoint our warriors to their several posts." And it was agreed that Dhristadyumna should fight Drona, and Yudhishtira fight Salya, and Nakula fight Aswattháma, and Bhíma fight Duryodhana, and Arjuna fight Karna, and others of the Pándavas fight others of the Kauravas.

Circumstances which preceded the promulgation of the rules.

And when it was evening and all was ready for the battle, Bhíshma and Drona sent certain messengers to Yudhishtira, saying:—"Now that a war is fully determined upon between us, it is necessary to settle that it should be maintained on right principles; let it, therefore, be agreed between us as follows:—

Rules framed by Bhíshma and Drona, and agreed to by Yudhishtira.

"1. We will make war on each other without stratagem, and without treachery:

(1.) No stratagem or treachery.

"2. When we are fighting one with the other we will on each side stand to our arms to slay or to be slain, to take captive or to become captive; but when we leave off fighting, our people and your people are free to mess together, and may come or go to each other's quarters, and hold conference together:

(2.) Perfect truce between the combats.

"3. We will not slay the man who runs away, nor he who throws down his arms, nor he who beats a drum, nor he who drives a chariot:

(3.) Fugitives, suppliants, drummers, and chariot-drivers, to be treated as non-combatant.

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(4.) A superior
arm to fight
only its equal.

(5.) No combat
to take place
during the pre-
liminary abuse.

(6.) No combat
to take place
without warn-
ing.

(7.) No third
warrior to inter-
fere between
two combatants.

"4. Horsemen shall only fight with horsemen, riders on elephants with riders on elephants, warriors in chariots with warriors in chariots, and footmen with footmen :

"5. When the warriors are fighting with words only, and are abusing one another, no one amongst them shall take up arms against the other :

"6. No man shall take up arms against another without giving him warning :

"7. When two combatants are engaged with each other, no third man shall interfere."

And when the messengers delivered these words to the Pándavas, Raja Yudhishtira and Krishna rejoiced greatly ; and Yudhishtira said :—" Bhíshma is our lord, and Drona is the preceptor of us all ; therefore their words are a law to us which we will all obey."

Foregoing rules
apparently of
modern date.

Disregarded in
the war of the
Mahá Bhárata.

Brahmanical
origin of the
rules.

Confusion be-
tween stratagem
and treachery.

The foregoing rules are curious and suggestive, but they evidently belong to a later age of civilization than the war of the Mahá Bhárata. It will be seen, hereafter, that they were almost entirely disregarded in the deadly contest which ensued between the Kauravas and the Pándavas ; and, indeed, they are out of keeping both with the barbarous character of the times, and the ferocious enmity which prevailed between the rival kinsmen. The probability is that they were inserted by the Brahmanical compilers as authoritative rules, promulgated under the special sanction of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata, and consequently obligatory upon all warriors in after ages. Indeed, it may be inferred, from the tone of the rules, that they did not originate with fighting men ; but rather with a priest caste who were but imperfectly acquainted with the theory of war, and who had no practical acquaintance with the spirit in which it must be carried on. In the first rule stratagem is for-

bidden, and is apparently confounded with treachery; whereas ambushes, surprises, and deceptive appearances were the life and soul of ancient warfare. Then again, the perfect peace which according to the second rule was to prevail between the two parties in the intervals of fighting, could scarcely have been observed in that mortal struggle which was avowedly a war to the knife, in which neither party could gain the victory without the slaughter of all its antagonists. The third rule was apparently more reasonable. It virtually ordered that all fugitives, and all who threw down their arms, as well as all drummers and chariot-drivers, should be treated as non-combatants. The fourth rule, which declared that horsemen should only fight with horsemen, elephant riders with elephant riders, chariots with chariots, and footmen with footmen, is evidently the conception of a philanthropic mind wholly ignorant of the practice of war. Ancient armies consisted mainly of infantry, and in all probability this was the case in the armies that fought in the war of the Mahá Bhárata; whilst horses, elephants, and chariots were employed, not so much to act against forces of a similar character, as to charge the masses of foot soldiers, and disperse that all-important arm. The fifth, sixth, and seventh rules may have belonged to more ancient times, and indeed are singularly illustrative of the primitive simplicity of primeval wars. The fifth rule provided that so long as two warriors, or companies of warriors, were abusing each other, or confining themselves to a mere battle of words, no man amongst them should take up arms against another whatever might be the provocation he had received. The

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Impracticability of the constantly recurring truces.

Rational rule as regards non-combatants.

Absurdity of the rule that cavalry should only fight with cavalry, &c.

Possible antiquity of the 5th, 6th, and 7th rules.

Natural law against fighting during the preliminary abuse, or without warning, or for a third warrior to interfere between two combatants.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Non-observance
of the law by
the ancient
heroes.

sixth rule provided that no man should take up arms against another without giving him previous warning. The seventh rule provided that when two warriors were fighting together, a third warrior should not interfere. But even these three latter rules, which were fully recognized as a standard of morality by the compilers of both the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, were by no means rigidly observed, either by the warriors who fought in the war of Bhárata, or by the great hero of the Rámáyana.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EIGHTEEN DAYS OF THE GREAT WAR.

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PART II.

Eve of the great
war of Bhārata.

THE great war of Bhārata was now on the eve of breaking out. Every preliminary had been arranged for the commencement of hostilities, and the rival parties were apparently thirsting for the battle. Nothing, save perhaps religious animosity, appears to have been wanting to render the war a ferocious and deadly struggle. They were near kinsmen fighting for an inheritance. The jealousy and hatred of years was rankling in their hearts. The Kauravas were in possession of the Raj, and had succeeded for a long period in excluding their kinsmen from any share in the possession. The Pándavas, with the exception of their timid elder brother, were like starving men fighting for the means of subsistence; and to some extent they may have been actuated by a desire to revenge the affront inflicted upon Draupadī. At the same time it must be remarked, that throughout the narrative there is not a single reference to nationality or patriotism, religion or sentiment. The war was neither a contest against a foreign invader, nor an internal struggle against a tyrant, nor a loyal rising in favour of a deposed ruler, nor a crusade in behalf of religion, nor even an aggression for the sake of conquest. It was a

Mean character
of the war.

HISTORY OF
INDIA,
PART II.

more war to the knife between near kinsmen for the sake of land; and it was but little redeemed by those ideas of right and justice which occasionally elevate warriors into heroes, and convert the bloody conflict of armies into a final and solemn appeal to the God of battles.

Form in which
the history of
the war has
been preserved.

Extraordinary
extent to which
the original
Kshatriya tra-
dition has been
enlarged and
interpolated by
the Brahman-
ical compilers.

The form, however, in which the history of this war has been preserved is most extraordinary. In the original Kshatriya tradition the story was probably told in a series of war-ballads, narrating at some length the combats between the more celebrated warriors, and the many turns in the progress of the struggle. But in the more modern Brahmanical version of the Mahá Bhárata these simple incidents have been spun out to a tedious and bewildering length. Puerile dialogues have been introduced at every fluctuation of the fortunes of the war, apparently not so much to add to the stock of facts as to impress the leading events more deeply upon the memories of an uncultured audience. Then, again, this portion of the narrative has been interpolated in all directions with miraculous feats of arms, and other supernatural details, as well as with prolix discourses upon moral and religious subjects, which are utterly at variance with the spirit of the ancient tradition. The result has been that whilst the childish conversations and weird-like scenes and incidents have even to the present day a strange fascination for the dreamy and credulous intellect of the Hindú, the wearisome string of senseless talk, extravagant fables, and irrelevant disquisitions, is so foreign to European tastes and ideas, and so wanting in historical significance, as to be positively nauseous to enlightened readers. Accordingly, in

Necessity for
eliminating a
large portion of
the matter in
order to render
the narrative
available for his-
torical purposes.

dealing with this portion of the Mahá Bhárata, it has been deemed expedient to eliminate a considerable mass of details from the story of the war. The dialogues have been cut away, excepting where they really possessed a dramatic value and illustrated the individual character of the speakers. The descriptions of combats and charges, which in many cases are mere repetitions, have been omitted to a very considerable extent; and only those incidents and scenes have been selected which seemed likely to convey an approximate idea of the real nature and extent of the contest. In a like manner the didactic discourses, which are evidently the product of a Brahmanical age, have been excluded from the text and reserved for future discussion.

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Diffuse dialogues.

Wearisome descriptions of combats and charges all resembling each other.

Brahmanical discourses.

Before, however, proceeding with the task of selection, it may be convenient to specify more particularly the character and scope of the matter which has been laid aside; especially as such a description will serve to indicate more clearly the heterogeneous elements which compose the national Epic. In the first place, it may be remarked that the war is said to have lasted eighteen days; and though it was probably included within a much more restricted period, yet still for the present the term of eighteen days may be accepted. The armies, however, which were engaged on either side, are said to have included such vast numbers of forces that the account may be safely rejected as altogether incredible. Princes from the remotest quarters of India, the mythical ancestors of the Rajas who reigned during the period when the modern version of the Mahá Bhárata appears to have been composed, are said to have ranged themselves either on the side of the Kaura-

General description of the excluded matter.

Mythical references to the vast armies engaged on either side.

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PART II.

vas, or on that of the Pándavas, accompanied by mighty hosts to which even the fabled armies of Semiramis and Xerxes sink into insignificance. Indeed the number of forces said to have been engaged on this memorable occasion far exceed all ordinary calculation, consisting of millions, billions, trillions, and even more extravagant enumerations; so that if all the present inhabitants of the earth were assumed to be fit to carry arms, and were multiplied a thousand times over, they would still fall very far short of the number of men who are said to have fought to the death on the plain of Kurukshetra. Even the elephants and chariots are counted by lakhs and crores, or, in other words, by hundreds of thousands and tens of millions.

Mythical details
of the battles.

Superhuman
strength and
skill of the war-
riors engaged.

Employment of
magical wea-
pons.

Supernatural
exploits.

Extraordinary
omens.

The details of this primitive war have been in like manner exaggerated beyond all credibility. The leading warriors, whilst fighting with all the bloodthirsty desperation of savages, and burning with all the frenzied wrath of demons, are endowed with superhuman strength and skill which raise them to the rank of demigods. Magical weapons are employed which are said to have been received from the gods, but which could only have existed in the wild imaginations of Brahmanical bards who were totally ignorant of the practice of war. Chariots are said to have been broken in pieces, or burnt to ashes, by the discharge of a single arrow. Elephants are felled to the earth and slaughtered by single-handed warriors. Armies are subdued and slain by the arrows of individual heroes. The picture thus presented of the field of battle resembles a troubled and unearthly dream. On the eve of the war fearful omens appear in the heavens and upon the

earth, portending the most terrible calamities. Show-ers of blood fall from the sky ; the roll of thunder is heard when not a cloud is to be seen ; the moon burns like fire ; asses are born from cows, cows from mares, and jackals from dogs. The battle commences with all the pomp and circumstance of an ideal war, mingled with its worst realities. Drums are beaten, trumpets and war-shells are sounded, and gorgeous banners are waving in the air. Gigantic Râjas, magnificently arrayed in golden mail, and armed with every weapon, are standing up in their chariots, radiant with the strings of jewels which sparkle upon their necks and arms. Armies are drawn up in fantastic shapes, such as a spider's web, a half-moon, or a bird with outstretched wings. Elephants, cavalry, and endless hosts of infantry, are swayed to and fro like the rushing waves of a boundless sea at the new and full moon. The air is thick with darts and arrows, or illuminated with the flashing of swords and spears. But meantime the sky is rent with the shrieks and screams of the wounded and dying ; and the plain is overflowing with the rivers of blood which have issued from the myriads of human beings who are said to have been slaughtered in that universal struggle.

Exaggerated
pomp and cir-
cumstance.

Exaggerated
slaughter.

If, however, in the place of innumerable armies and superhuman battles, the attention is directed to the real nature of the contest, namely, a war to the knife between two branches of the same family for possession of a landed inheritance, it is possible to arrive at a much clearer perception of the number of forces which were actually engaged, and the real character and scope of the memorable contest. It will be seen that the issue of the great war did not

Real character
of the contest:
a war to the
knife between
two branches of
the same family
for the posses-
sion of a landed
inheritance.

Probable num-
bers engaged.

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Barbarous
single combats
with clubs and
knives.

Free practice of
treachery, de-
ceit, and foul
play.

Irrelevant in-
troduction of
Brahmanical
disquisitions.

depend upon the engagements of armies, but upon the combats of individual warriors; and indeed so much stress is laid upon these single combats that the innumerable hosts, which are said to have been led upon the field, dwindle down into mere companies of friends and retainers. Again, it will be seen that whilst the Brahmanical compilers love to dwell upon combats with magical darts and arrows, which could only have been carried on when the enemy was at a certain distance; yet the decisive combats were those in which the rude warriors on either side came to close quarters. Then they fought each other with clubs, knives, and clenched fists; and cut, and hacked, and hewed, and wrestled, and kicked, until the conqueror threw down his adversary, and severed his head from his body, and carried away the bleeding trophy in savage triumph. Meantime it seems evident, notwithstanding the rules which had been laid down on the eve of the war, and notwithstanding the efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to conceal or explain away the facts, that treachery, deceit, and foul play were freely practised, even by such a warrior as Arjuna; and it is curious to observe that efforts are made in his case to sanctify the deed, by representing the divine hero, Krishna, as inciting him to the act, and then extenuating the crime.

But there remains one other anomalous characteristic of the history of the great war, as it is recorded in the Mahá Bhárata, which cannot be passed over in silence; and that is the extraordinary abruptness and infelicity with which Brahmanical discourses, such as essays on law, on morals, sermons on divine things, and even instruction in the

so called sciences, are recklessly grafted upon the main narrative. Sanjaya, the charioteer, who is employed to inform the blind Mahárája of every event that transpired during the progress of the war, entertains his Royal Master with a preliminary dissertation upon the geography of the earth in general, and of the continent of India in particular. Krishna and Arjuna, on the morning of the first day of the war, when both armies are drawn out in battle-array, and hostilities are about to begin, enter into a long and philosophical dialogue respecting the various forms of devotion which lead to the emancipation of the soul; and it cannot be denied that however incongruous and irrelevant such a dialogue must appear on the eve of battle, the discourse of Krishna, whilst acting as the charioteer of Arjuna, contains the essence of the most spiritual phases of Brahmanical teaching, and is expressed in language of such depth and sublimity that it has become deservedly known as the Bhagavat-Gítá, or "Divine Song."

The venerable patriarch Bhíshma, after receiving a mortal wound, is not permitted to die; but lies, like an ascetic, upon a couch formed of the upturned points of arrows, in order that many weeks after the war he may deliver to Yudhishtira a lengthy address upon the duties of Rajas and the final emancipation of the soul. Still more incongruous is a sermon on the efficacy of places of pilgrimage, which is introduced just before the final combat with clubs between Duryodhana and Bhíma. Indeed no effort has been spared by the Brahmanical compilers to convert the history of the great war into a vehicle for Brahmanical teaching; and indeed so skilfully are many of these interpolations interwoven with

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Sanjaya's discourse on geography to the blind Mahárája

Dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the field of battle, known as the Bhagavat-Gítá, or "Divine Song."

Bhíshma's discourse on the duties of Rajas, whilst lying mortally wounded on a couch of arrow-heads.

Final combat between Duryodhana and Bhíma prefaced by a sermon on the efficacy of places of pilgrimage.

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the story that it is frequently impossible to narrate the one without referring to the other, however irrelevant the matter may be to the main subject in hand.¹

¹ Some idea may be formed of the original by the following translation of the first chapter of the Bhagavad-Gītā, which comprises the appearance of the field of battle on the morning of the first day. It will be seen that the blind Mahārāja Dhritarāshtra is being informed by his charioteer Sanjaya of what had taken place. The translation is by Mr J. C. Thomson, and has been extracted from his valuable edition of the Bhagavad-Gītā.

“ Dhritarāshtra spoke.

What did my followers and those of Pāndu do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain, the plain of Kuru, Sanjaya?

“ Sanjaya spoke.

When King Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pāndavas drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor and spoke these words: ‘ Behold, O preceptor! this huge army of the sons of Pāndu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada. In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bhīma and Arjuna in battle (namely): Yuyudhāna and Virāta, and Drupada on his great car; Dhṛishṭaketu, Chekitāna, and the valiant King of Kāshi; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaivya, chief of men; and Yudhāmanya the strong, and Uttamaujas the brave, the son of Subhadra, and all the sons of Draupadi, too, in their huge chariots. But remark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O best of Brāhmins! I will name them to thee, that thou mayst know them.

“ ‘ There are thyself, and Bhīshma, and Karna, and Kripa, victorious in battle, Aswatthāma, and Vikarna, and Saumadatti too, and many other heroes, who risk their lives for my sake armed with divers weapons, all experienced in war. This army of mine, which is commanded by Bhīshma, is not sufficient; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bhīma, is sufficient. And do you, even all of you, drawn up in all the ranks of the army, according to your grades, attend even to Bhīshma.’

“ Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus blew his trumpet, sounding loud as the roar of a lion. Then, on a sudden, trumpets, kettle-drums, cymbals, drums, and horns were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar. And standing on a huge car drawn by white horses, the slayer of Madhu and the son of Pāndu blew their celestial trumpets. Krishna (blew his horn called) Pāñchajanya; the Despiser of wealth blew ‘ the Gift of the Gods; ’ he of dreadful deeds and wolfish entrails blew a great trumpet called Paundra; King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew ‘ the Eternal Victory; ’ Nakula and Sahadeva blew ‘ the Sweet-toned ’ and the ‘ Blooming-with-jewels. ’ The King of Kāshi, renowned for the excellence of his bow, and Shikandin in his huge chariot, Dhṛishṭadyumna, and Virāta and Sātyaki, unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, altogether, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadra, each severally blew their trumpets. That noise lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritarāshtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhārtarāshtras drawn up, and that the flying of arrows had commenced, he raised his bow, and then addressed these words, O king of earth! to Krishna.

“ ‘ Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One! between the two armies, that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, (and see) with whom I have

With these preliminary observations it may now be possible to select those descriptions which may

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to fight in the strife of war. I perceive that those who are assembled here are about to fight, from a wish by so doing to do a favour to the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

“Sanjaya spoke.

Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna, O Bhārata! drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; and before Bhishma and Drona and all the kings of the earth, he said :—

“Behold, O King! these Kurus here assembled.’ Standing there, the King beheld fathers and grandfathers, preceptors and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances, in both of the armies. Gazing on all these relations drawn up (in battle-array), the son of Kuntī, moved by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness, as follows :—

“Arjuna spoke.

“Now that I have beheld here this kindred standing near together for the purpose of fighting, my limbs give way, and my face is dried up (of the blood in my veins) and tremour is produced throughout my body, and my hair stands on end. My bow, Gāndīva, slips from my hand, and my skin, too, burns (with fever). Nor am I able to remain upright, and my mind is, as it were, whirling round. And I perceive adverse omens, O hairy one! Nor do I foresee anything better, even when I shall have slain these relations in battle. I seek not victory, Krishna, nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we do with a kingdom, Govinda? What with enjoyments, or with life itself, (if we slew these relatives)? Those very men—on whose account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments, or pleasures—are assembled for battle, having given up their lives and riches. Teachers, fathers, and even sons, and grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, with connections also—these I would not wish to slay, though I were slain myself, O killer of Madhu!—not even for the sake of the sovereignty of the triple world, how much less for that of this earth! When we had killed the Dhārtarāshtras, what pleasure should we have, O thou who art prayed to by mortals? We should incur a crime were we to put to death these villains. Therefore we are not right to kill the Dhārtarāshtras, our own relations, for how could we be happy, after killing our own kindred, O slayer of Madhu?

“Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness, do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who do look upon the slaughter of one’s tribe as a crime, O thou who art supplicated by mortals? In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions (laws) of the tribe are destroyed. These laws being destroyed, lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna; and when the women are corrupted, O son of Vrishni! confusion of caste takes place. Confusion of caste is (a gate) to hell both for the destroyers of the tribe and for the tribe itself. For their fathers are deprived of the rites of funeral-cakes and libations of water, and thus fall (from heaven). By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those who cause confusion of caste, the eternal institutions of caste and tribe are subverted. We have learnt (from sacred writ) that a sojourn in hell necessarily awaits the men who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna! Alas! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we

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Bhishma and Drona excuse themselves from fighting for the Pándavas.

Yuyutsu, half brother of Duryodhana, goes over to the Pándavas.

Joy of the Pándavas.

Mythical character of the foregoing incidents.

The story of Yudhishtira's requests referable to the later Brahmanical period.

Improbability of Bhishma and Drona's professed partiality for the Pándavas.

many years we have eaten their bread and salt, or otherwise we would have fought for you." Then Yudhishtira returned to the army of the Pándavas, and when he was midway between them and the Kauravas, he turned round and said with a loud voice to the army of the Kauravas:—"O my friends, whoever wishes well to our cause, let him come over and join us." At these words Yuyutsu, who was a half brother of Duryodhana, deserted his own party and presented himself to Yudhishtira, and said:—"If you will take me by the hand, and promote me, I will engage myself in your service." Yudhishtira answered:—"Come then, I pray you, and I will regard you as one of my own brethren." Then Yuyutsu came out with all his followers from amongst the Kauravas, and he ordered his drums to beat, and cried out:—"I am going over to the army of the Pándavas; so let him who desires to hinder me come forth and fight me." But no man came out to oppose him. So Yuyutsu went over and presented himself in due form to Yudhishtira; and the Pándavas and all their army were much rejoiced, and beat their drums in joy; and Yudhishtira took off the coat of mail from his own body, and had it put upon Yuyutsu, and he called for another cuirass for himself.

The apparently mythical character of the foregoing incidents may now be briefly indicated. The strange story of the visit paid by Yudhishtira to Bhishma and Drona on the very morning of the battle, and his Pharisaical request that they would permit him to fight the Kauravas, evidently has its origin in the abject submission to elders and preceptors which is so rigidly enforced by Brahmanical law. The proceedings of Bhishma and Drona are equally forced and artificial. Their open declaration that they would have fought on the side of the Pándavas had they not eaten the bread and salt of the Mahárāja, is not only improbable, but inconsistent.

ent with the post held by Bhíshma as Generalissimo of the allied armies of the Kauravas, and the esteem and respect in which both were held by the sons of Dhritaráshtra. At the same time such a declaration is perfectly in accordance with the mythical speeches said to have been delivered by those warriors at the Council held at Hastinápur to receive Krishna as an ambassador from the Pándavas. Accordingly it seems highly probable that the incident has been introduced to harmonize the violent partisanship which they exhibited at the Council in favour of the Pándavas, with the fact that they were prepared to fight to the death in behalf of the Kauravas. The desertion of Yuyutsu from the Kauravas to the Pándavas is somewhat dubious. It may be either an actual fact, or a mythical interpolation. He is said to have been a son of the Mahárajá, but only a half-brother to the Kauravas; and it is easy to conceive of a jealousy between the half-brothers which may have led to the desertion of Yuyutsu on such an occasion. At the same time, the existence of Yuyutsu is doubtful. The blind Mahárajá is not likely to have had a son by any woman save his wife Gándhári. Moreover, as all the Kauravas are said to have been ultimately slain upon the field of battle, the Mahárajá would have been doomed to the fate, so terrible in the eyes of a Hindú, of dying without leaving a son behind him. The introduction of Yuyutsu as a son by another mother, and the preservation of his life by a timely desertion, saved the Mahárajá from so dire a calamity.

Introduced to harmonize with the speeches they are said to have delivered at Krishna's embassy.

Dubious authenticity of the desertion of Yuyutsu.

The story of the commencement of the battle, and the combats which ensued on the first day of the war, may now be related as follows:—

First day of the war.

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Battle between
Bhishma and
Bhima, and
their respective
armies.

Character of the
battle.

Single combats.

Disregard of the
rules of fighting.

Combat between
the youthful
Abhimanyu and
the patriarch
Bhishma.

Now after Yudhishtira had returned to the army of the Pándavas, Bhíshma advanced with the troops of the Kauravas, and Bhíma marched out from amongst the Pándavas to confront him. And Bhíshma blew his war-shell which sounded like the roar of a lion. And Krishna and Arjuna sounded their shells in reply, standing in a huge chariot drawn by white horses; for Krishna drove the chariot of Arjuna on all the days of the war. At that moment there was a mighty uproar throughout the plain; and the air was filled with the beating of drums and the sounding of war-shells; and the men shouted, and the elephants roared, and the horses neighed, so that the earth and air resounded with a clangour which seemed to reach the sky. Then Bhíma cried out with a voice of thunder, louder than all the other noises; and the Kauravas were deafened at his cries, and were as fearful as children who had seen a demon; and they hurled a shower of darts at him. Then Duryodhana advanced with ten of his brethren, and they shot their arrows at Bhíma and his soldiers, and thus the battle commenced; and the shouting of the combatants, and the gleaming of the cuirasses, and the flashing of the swords and spears, were like a storm of thunder and lightning. And the other Pándavas came out to help Bhíma, and there was as good a battle among them as has ever been seen or heard, whilst the dust dimmed the light of the sun, and the sword-strokes fell like heavy rain upon a mountain. And Yudhishtira fought Sálya, and Dhrishta-dyumna fought Drona, and Drupada fought Jayadratha, and there were very many other single combats between renowned warriors whose names need not be declared. And they fought fairly for about an hour or two, each man against his own foe, and those who were mounted fought against those who were mounted, and those who were on foot against those who were on foot; but then, like drunken Asuras, they forgot all the laws of fair fighting, and fell to in great confusion. And Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, seeing that the battle was going against the Pándavas, went out against Bhíshma, and fought with great valour; and he cut down the ensign on

Bhíshma's chariot, and passed on and killed some and wounded many; and as he was returning, many darts were thrown at him, but he regarded them as so many drops of water; and Bhíshma bestowed great praise upon Abhimanyu, and said that of all the heroes he had ever known, he had never before seen a youth, whose age was only sixteen years, perform such prodigies of valour. And Uttar, son of Raja Viráta, was mounted on an elephant, and fought against Sálya; and his elephant overturned Sálya's chariot with his trunk, and Sálya fell to the ground; but Sálya rose up and discharged an arrow at Uttar, who thereupon fell senseless from the elephant, and was carried off by his father's people; and Sálya slew the elephant, and it fell to the ground like a tower. Then Bhíshma charged the soldiers of the Pándavas and made great havoc, but Arjuna went out against him; and Bhíshma attacked Arjuna first, and the two fought together for a long while, until the sun set and the drums beat to quarters, and the first day of the great war of Bhárata was fully over.

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Praises bestowed by Bhíshma upon the prowess of Abhimanyu.

Combat between Uttar and Sálya.

Combat between Bhíshma and Arjuna.

The foregoing account of the first day of the war of Bhárata is followed in the Mahá Bhárata by a dialogue between Yudhishtira and Krishna, which is both puerile and mythical. The language is poor and the matter contemptible, whilst it seems to have been inserted for the sole purpose of associating Krishna with the war. As, however, it may serve as a fair specimen of the many dialogues which are introduced into the story, it may be reproduced here, as follows:—

Mythical dialogue between Yudhishtira and Krishna.

Now when it was night, Yudhishtira went to the lodgings of Krishna, together with his brethren, and Dhrishta-dyumna, and other warriors; and he said to him:—“You have seen, O Krishna, how Bhíshma has fought this day, and how in his old age he so handled our army, that had not Arjuna stood out against him we should have been wholly discomfited: These people of mine compared with

Yudhishtira complains of the havoc committed by Bhíshma, and proposes retiring.

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Alarm of Bhishma at the havoc created by Arjuna.

Successes of the Pándavas.

Third day of the war.
Tremendous charge of the Pándavas in the form of a half-moon.

Terrible slaughter.

Cries of the wounded.

Dead men rise without heads and fight each other.

Krishna blew their shells in triumph. Meantime the wise Bhishma perceived the disastrous condition of his army, and was much astonished, and he said to Drona:—"See, worthy preceptor, how Arjuna is committing fearful havoc: He is dreadful as Yama, and I see no chance of defeating him this day; and our own army is so shattered that we cannot lead them against the Pándavas, who the more they fight seem to grow the stronger: The gods are against us; our warriors are weary and panic-stricken; and it would be unwise to expose them this day to another conflict: So pass the order for leaving the field, and direct that all may be ready in the morning for to-morrow's battle." Then Drona gave the order, and the Kauravas returned to their camp with sad hearts. But on that day the Pándavas had done mighty things, and they and their troops returned to their quarters in great joy and glory; and so that night passed away.

On the morning of the third day the Pándavas drew up their army in the form of a half-moon, and made such a charge that they fell at once on the front and two flanks of the Kauravas. And they dashed on pell-mell and broke the enemy's line and throw it into disorder, and then re-formed themselves and charged again; and in the confusion charioteers and horsemen charged the footmen contrary to rule, and slew them with darts on which they had inscribed their own names; but order was soon restored by Bhishma and Arjuna, and they then fought their equals only, as had been agreed upon at the beginning of the war. The slaughter on this day was terrible, and the plain was strewed with heaps of dead, and weapons of every description, and bodies without heads, and horses without riders; and the dust was laid with rivers of blood; and the wounded writhed about in all directions and filled the air with their piercing shrieks and melancholy cries; and still as they fell and rose they struggled in combat with each other; and from the excess of bloodshed and carnage that day the battle was called Maharadra. Even the bodies of those who were dead rose up without their heads and fought each other; and when the people saw this they saw it was an omen that the whole of

the living would be slain. Then the great Chieftains of the Kauravas fell upon the Pándavas, and the battle raged furiously, and was fearful to behold; for when the swords of the warriors were blunted and their arrows spent, they tore up trees by the roots and slew each other with them, or flew at each other with their clenched fists, and kicked, and wrestled, and tore each other with their teeth and nails. And the Pándavas drove back the Kauravas, and the Kauravas in their flight resembled the rushing of the waters at the new and full moon.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

The warriors
fight with their
fists, feet, teeth,
and nails.

Repulse of the
Kauravas.

Duryodhana now saw that his forces were being routed, and he went to Bhíshma and complained of his indifference to the slaughter of the Kauravas, and begged that he would exert himself to the utmost to defeat the Pándavas. At these words the eyes of Bhíshma became red with wrath, but he sounded the shells and trumpets, and the Kauravas responded to the call; and the battle raged again more furiously than before, and Bhíshma drove the army of the Pándavas before him, and killed very many. But Arjuna requested Krishna to drive him against Bhíshma, and the Pándavas turned back and fought desperately; and after a long time the Kauravas were defeated, and retired to their own quarters; and the Pándavas blew the shell of victory and returned in triumph to their camp, and bestowed great praises upon Arjuna, and thus ended the third day of the battle.

Duryodhana
complains of the
indifference of
Bhishma.

Bhishmarenews
the battle, but
the Kauravas
are driven back
by Arjuna.

And now the war raged every day from the fourth to the ninth day, and sometimes the Chieftains fought single combats, and sometimes the armies fought together pell-mell; but though very many were killed on either side, yet the issue was as far off as ever, and the Pándavas were still unconquered, whilst the Kauravas were much disheartened at their ill success. On the evening of the ninth day, when the Kauravas had returned to their quarters, Duryodhana, Sakuni, Duhsásana, and Karna held a consultation together about their disasters; and Duryodhana said:—"O warriors, why is it that whilst we have Bhíshma, and Drona, and Kripa, and Sálya on our side, we are still unable to conquer

The war rages
from the fourth
to the ninth day.

Kauravas dis-
heartened at not
conquering the
Pándavas.

Duryodhana
complains to his
Chieftains of his
want of success.

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PART II.

Mythical story that Bhishma lay for many days upon a couch formed of arrow heads, and then delivered some moral and religious discourses.

teacher. Bhíshma is said to have been so thickly pierced in every part of his body by the arrows of Arjuna, that when he fell mortally wounded from his chariot, he rested as it were upon the points of the arrows. A pillow for his head was formed by three more arrows. In this condition he lay in a state of consciousness for many weeks, having received from his father the miraculous power of fixing the hour when he should die. In the first instance he called for Duryodhana, and in a lengthy address advised him before it was too late to restore half of the Raj to the Pándavas; and subsequently tried to persuade Karna to desert Duryodhana and espouse the cause of the Pándavas. Having failed in both cases, he continued to lie on his arrowy couch, until long after the war was over, when just before giving up the ghost he took the opportunity of delivering to Yudhishthira a prolix discourse on the duties of kings.² Such startling incongruities as these are only valuable as illustrating the character of the interpolations, which the Brahmanical compilers have introduced into the national Epic; but the Brahmanical teaching involved in the discourses will be brought under discussion in dealing with the religious ideas which prevailed at a later age.

2nd, Drona's command—five days.

The second period in the progress of the war comprises the history of the five days during which

² Another preposterous myth connected with the death of Bhíshma may be recorded in a note. He is said to have received the mortal wound not from Arjuna, but from a warrior named Sikhandin, who was a younger son of Raja Drupada. In a previous birth Sikhandin is said to have been a female named Ambá, and was indeed the elder daughter of the Raja of Kási whom Bhishma had carried away to be the wife of his half-brother Vichitra-virya. She had perished in the jungle, but before her death she had been assured by Parasu Ráma, that she should become a man in a future birth, and cause the death of Bhíshma, who had been the author of all her misfortunes. See page 53.

the command was held by the preceptor Drona, who succeeded Bhíshma as Generalissimo of the Kauravas. At this stage of the contest the single combats became more prominent; and it is evident that in the original tradition it was in a great measure these combats that decided the fortunes of the war. The narrative of Drona's command is characterized by three important incidents:—

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PART II.

Prominence of
single combats.

Three important
incidents in the
history of Dro-
na's command.

1st, The attempts of Drona and the Kauravas to take Yudhishtira prisoner.

2nd, The death of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and the tragical circumstances which followed it.

3rd, The death of Drona, who was slain in a single combat with Dhrishta-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pándavas.

These incidents will call for remark hereafter, but they may first be related as follows:—

Now it was on the tenth day of his command that Bhíshma was mortally wounded; and Duryodhana, and his brethren, and all his allies returned to the camp very mournful; and they elected Drona to take the command in the room of Bhíshma.

Election of
Drona.

And on the morrow, which was the first day of Drona's command, and the eleventh of the war, Drona promised Duryodhana that he would take Yudhishtira prisoner; but he could not do as he had desired, for Krishna and Arjuna were ever on the alert to protect Yudhishtira. And when it was evening, Drona said to Duryodhana:—"I cannot deliver Yudhishtira into your hands whilst Krishna and Arjuna are his keepers; but if you can draw away Arjuna from the field, I can take Yudhishtira alive." Then Susarman, Raja of Trigarta, said to Duryodhana:—"I and my four brethren will send a challenge to Arjuna on the morrow to fight us at some place far away from Yudhishtira; and it is certain that he will accept the challenge

Eleventh day of
the war and
first of Drona's
command.

Efforts of Drona
to take Yudhishtira
prisoner.

Frustrated by
Krishna and
Arjuna.

Susarman and
his four brethren
send a
challenge to
Arjuna.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Pándavas pre-
vented by Jaya-
dratha from res-
cuing Abhi-
manyu.

Abhimanyu
overpowered by
six warriors and
slain.

Extreme beauty
and prowess of
Abhimanyu.

Profound grief
of Yudhishtira.

General outcry
against the
cowardly Chief-
tains who slew
Abhimanyu.

Arjuna's over-
powering grief
at hearing of the
death of Abhi-
manyu.

Vows to slay
Jayadratha be-
fore sunset on
the morrow.

single man against all the Kauravas. Meanwhile the Pándavas saw that the boy was being hemmed in, and they pursued him closely to deliver him; but the wicked Jayadratha saw what they were striving to do, and the fire of enmity was in his heart, for the humiliation he had received after carrying away Draupadí. And Jayadratha threw himself into the way of the Pándavas, so that they could not pass him and rescue Abhimanyu. At this time Duhśāsana, and his son, and four other warriors surrounded the young Abhimanyu, and thought to slay him; but he still withstood them all. At last his foot slipped, and just as he was recovering himself, the son of Duhśāsana struck him on the head with his mace and dashed out his brains; and he died that same moment as pure as if he had never been born. And he was very young and very handsome, and he left the world with such a display of valour as no man has ever seen; and such sweetness and beauty appeared upon his dead body, that all who saw him were astonished at his comeliness, and they lamented him very sore. And when Yudhishtira heard that Abhimanyu was dead, he rushed to the spot and found him lying on the earth covered with wounds as befits a hero; and he could not endure the sight, but threw himself upon the ground, weeping and wailing; and casting dust upon his head; for he knew that it was by his command that Abhimanyu had gone upon this service. And all his friends and all the enemies of the Kauravas alike condemned the manner of the death of Abhimanyu, for they said it was a cowardly thing for six experienced Chieftains to fall upon such a stripling.

Now as Arjuna was returning from fighting Susarman, he saw many evil omens, and he showed them to Krishna; and when they returned to their quarters, Yudhishtira told him all that had happened to his son Abhimanyu; how that Abhimanyu had been beset by six heroes, and had fallen with the utmost glory, and how Jayadratha had blocked up the way and prevented the Pándavas from coming to the rescue; but he did not say that he had commanded Abhimanyu to charge the Kauravas. When Arjuna heard that his

son was slain, his grief was beyond all bounds, and he fell down like one dead; and when he recovered himself he swore that he would take the life of Jayadratha before the setting of the morrow's sun, or else enter the funeral pile; but he was a changed man under the burden of his grief, and the perspiration ran down his face heavily. Then Krishna said:—"Your son has perished so gloriously that his fame will endure for ever, and it might be said that he is still alive: Children, like worldly goods, are given to us by God, and he can resume them at his own pleasure." In this manner Krishna in some degree consoled Arjuna; and he then went off to comfort Subhadrá, the mother of the young man; and he said to her:—"How happy is the mother whose son has met with so glorious a destiny!" Then he spoke in like manner to the young widow Uttará, who was about to become a mother; and after a while he administered some consolation to them, for they had given themselves up to despair. He then dismissed all the Rajas who had come to console Arjuna, saying:—"It is now night, and the morrow is a great day for us, and you should not lose a moment of sleep that you can possibly secure." So the Rajas went to their several quarters, and Krishna was left alone with Arjuna; and he took him by the hand, and led him in, and seated him, and he laid many topics of consolation before him; for he would not leave him alone lest he should rush out in despair and fall madly upon the enemy in the night time; but he ordered all the people about him to continue armed and on the watch throughout the whole night. And when it was midnight Krishna called to his charioteer, and acquainted him with the vow that Arjuna had made to slay Jayadratha, and he ordered him to make ready his chariot at early morn that he might drive Arjuna to the battle.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Krishna con-
soles Arjuna.

Comforts Su-
bhadrá and
Uttará, the
mother and
widow of
Abhimanyu.

His touching
attendance
upon Arjuna
throughout the
night.

Orders his cha-
riot at early
morn to drive
Arjuna against
Jayadratha.

Meanwhile a spy, that was in the camp of the Pándavas, had gone to Jayadratha and told him of the vow that Arjuna had made. And Jayadratha was sore afraid, and at night time he went to Raja Duryodhana, and besought him for leave to depart; and Duryodhana took him to Drona, and

Cowardly at-
tempt of Jaya-
dratha to with-
draw.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Plain of Kurukshetra lit up by torches.

Battle scenes by torchlight.

Then Yudhishtira, seeing that the darkness was filling the plain with unutterable horror, ordered many lighted torches to be brought; and every man took a torch and fought with it in his hand, and ten torches were fastened to every chariot. And the whole plain of Kurukshetra was as light as day; and the golden cuirasses of the Rájas were as radiant as the sun; and the jewels on their arms and hands sparkled in the glare, and the swords and spears flashed like lightning. And they throw large stones at each other, and hurled chariot-wheels; and when a man threw his enemy down he cut off his head, and carried it in his hand; and their mouths were stained with blood as they thirsted for the blood of each other, and the plain was filled with dead corpses. And the son of Bhíma, by his Asura wife, was amongst the slain.

Short interval of slumber at midnight.

And when it was about midnight, and sleep was overpowering the eyes of all those who remained alive, Arjuna cried out with a loud voice that the battle should cease for a while, and that all men should rest and sleep. Then all the warriors on either side rejoiced at the words of Arjuna; and the rider of the elephant laid his head upon his elephant, and the horseman laid his head upon his horse, and for a brief space they were in a deep slumber; but presently the moon arose, and both armies were awakened and again begirt themselves for shedding each other's blood. Then Duryodhana reproached Drona, inasmuch as he had not murdered the Pándavas whilst they were sleeping; but Drona objected to the wicked perfidy, and said that Arjuna could never be taken thus. And the battle raged furiously, and Yudhishtira was sorely wounded, and the Rajas Viráta and Drupada were both defeated by Drona, and Drona cut off their heads upon the plain. Now the Pándavas were nearly vanquished, for thousands of their warriors were slain; but Dhrishta-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pándavas, vowed to avenge the death of his father Drupada, and took an oath that he would not drink water until he should have slain Drona. Then Bhíma said to Dhrishta-dyumna:—"You are too young a warrior to cope

renewal of the light by moonlight.

The battle goes against the Pándavas.

Vow of Dhrishta-dyumna to slay Drona.

Bhíma fights Drona until sunrise.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.Fifteenth day
of the war and
fifth of Drona's
command.Dhrishtha-dyuma-
na fights Drona.
Drona overcome
by means of a
lie.Dhrishtha-dyuma-
na beholds
Drona.Rejoicings of
the Pándavas.Deep regret of
the Kauravas at
the death of
Drona.Vow of Aswat-
tháma to re-
venge the death
of Drona.Order of the
commanding
generals to
quit their
arms at the
command.

with such an experienced soldier as Drona, so let me engage him first so as to tire him, and then do you come up and finish him." And Bhíma fought with Drona until the rising of the sun, and then Dhrishtha-dyumna fought against Drona until it was mid-day, but neither could prevail against him; but at this moment it was falsely told Drona that his son Aswattháma was dead; and Drona laid down his arms, and Dhrishtha-dyumna rushed upon him and severed his head from his body. And Dhrishtha-dyumna then took up the head of Drona, and throw it towards Duryodhana and the other Kauravas, saying:—"Take the head of him in whom you prided yourselves, and I will cut off all your heads in like manner."

Then all the Pándavas rejoiced exceedingly, and Bhíma ran to Dhrishtha-dyumna and embraced him, and kissed his hand and face, and said:—"To-morrow, when Karna also has lost his head, I will kiss and embrace you again." But all the Kauravas were very sorrowful when they beheld the head of Drona, and they were all disheartened, and like a flock without a shepherd; and they were in great despair, and said:—"The Pándavas have extinguished the light of us all." Then they all burst into tears and forsook the field of battle. At this time, Aswattháma, not knowing that his father Drona had been slain, went to Raja Duryodhana, and asked him why he desisted from fighting; and when Aswattháma heard all that had happened, he said:—"If I do not revenge the death of my father, and slay Dhrishtha-dyumna, and all his kinsfolk, I am not the son of Drona: So long as I have breath will I make war against the Pándavas."

The foregoing narrative of the five days of Drona's command comprises some of the most significant incidents in the history of the great war. Whilst it has been found impossible on all occasions to separate the mythical from the real, still the graphic pictures of barbarous warfare, and the terrible illustrations of the savage passion for re-

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Yudhishtira
represented as a
coward.

Brahmanical
reasons assigned
for his coward-
ice.

venge, which are frequently presented to the imagination, throw a strong light upon the real character of this memorable conflict.

The first point which demands consideration is the representation of Yudhishtira, not merely as a man of peace, but as an arrant coward. In the negotiations which preceded the war, he had offered to sacrifice so large a proportion of his own rights and those of his brothers as to excite the anger of Draupadī and the disapproval of Krishna. But in the foregoing narrative he exhibits a pusillanimity which is scarcely intelligible. When attacked by Drona he mounted a horse and galloped away; and such cowardice is excused on the ground that it was no shame for a Kshatriya to run away from a Bráhmaṇ. This assumption in favour of the Bráhmaṇs is startling from its very audacity, and may be ascribed to the same Brahmanical compilers who would convert Drona into a Brahmanical Guru or Acharya. Again, when Drona had drawn up his army in dangerous array, Yudhishtira refrained from charging the enemy himself, and commanded his young nephew, the boy bridegroom of sixteen years of age, to make the desperate attempt; but he appears to have been so ashamed of his conduct on this occasion that when he was called upon to tell the sad story to Arjuna, he carefully suppressed the fact that he had himself ordered Abhimanyu to charge the "spider's web." How far this singular timidity formed a part of the real character of Yudhishtira, or how far it is the result of the effort of the Brahmanical compilers to represent him in the character of Dharma, must of course be open to question. Possibly Yudhishtira, who is elsewhere

treated as a model of goodness and wisdom, is intended as an apology for the unwarlike conduct of the Bráhmans themselves, or for the cowardice of some priest-ridden Raja, who had been brought under the thralldom of the Bráhmans.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

The story of the death of Abhimanyu, and the tragical incidents which followed, forms, perhaps, one of the most touching events in the history of the war. How far the details are mythical will be a matter of opinion; but the main story is painfully pathetic. The boy bridegroom had been cowardly overpowered and slaughtered after performing prodigies of valour; and the beauty and sweetness of his countenance in death excited the pity of all who beheld him. But the wrath of the spectators was excited not so much by the dastardly conduct of the six warriors who had surrounded the stripling, as by the malicious proceeding of Jayadratha, the ill-conditioned Raja who had endeavoured to carry off Draupadí in the jungle, and who on the present occasion obstructed the Pándavas in their efforts to rush to the rescue. Under such circumstances the vow of the bereaved father to take the life of Jayadratha becomes intelligible, and the details connected with the performance of the vow are such as might have been expected in an ancient tradition which has been more or less embellished by the bards. But there are one or two collateral scenes which are very suggestive. The combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki is fearfully savage. After a desperate struggle without weapons, Bhurisrava throws his enemy upon the ground, and drags him along by the hair, and then prepares to cut off his head. Arjuna interferes, contrary to the laws of

Touching character of the story of Abhimanyu.

Savage character of the combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

war, and saves Sátyaki by mutilating Bhurisrava. Lastly, Sátyaki falls upon his wounded enemy, kicks and buffets him, and then cuts off his head. Such atrocious proceedings seem to have excited both armies to madness; and led to that desperate battle by torch-light which furnishes, perhaps, the most picturesque description of hand-to-hand carnage which can be found in the history of war.

Review of the
death of Drona.

The death of Drona, the venerable preceptor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, was evidently regarded as a turning-point in the great struggle. He had nearly vanquished the Pándavas by the slaughter of their chief allies; but he in his turn was slain by the son of one of his victims. He had defeated and put to death his ancient enemy Drupada, the Raja with whom he had been at feud when he first entered the service of Mahárája Dhritaráshtra; and it is a curious circumstance that the Pándavas had originally aided their preceptor in revenging himself upon Drupada, and had subsequently taken the daughter of Drupada to wife. Dhrishta-dyumna, the son of Drupada, swore to revenge the death of his father, and did eventually succeed in beheading Drona, as Drona had beheaded Drupada. But in the Mahá Bhárata the story of the combat between Dhrishta-dyumna and Drona is complicated by mythical details, which have apparently a two-fold object in view; namely, first to represent Drona as a Bráhmaṇ, and a faithful worshipper of Vishnu; and, secondly, to cover or conceal a treacherous lie which seems to have been told by Yudhishtira. The outline of these mythical additions may be indicated in a few words, and may perhaps serve as a sample of much of the religious matter which has

Mythical details recorded
in the Mahá
Bhárata.

Extraordinary
account of a lie
inadvertently
told by Yud-
hishtira.

been grafted upon the original tradition. The battle between Dhrishṭa-dyumna and Drona was fought with magical weapons, and gods and Rishis were amongst the spectators. Many armies came to the aid of Dhrishṭa-dyumna, but the martial skill of Drona, and his long and faithful worship of Vishnu, enabled him to resist every enemy. At length Krishna, somewhat inconsistently with his divine character, told Yudhishtira that if he would assure Drona that his son Aswattháma was dead, the old warrior would immediately lay down his arms and become an easy prey. Yudhishtira, however, utterly refused to tell a lie, even to secure the death of so powerful an enemy. Krishna then endeavoured to overcome the difficulty by directing the Pándavas to slay an elephant which was named Aswattháma; as by so doing the statement that Aswattháma was dead would cease to be a lie. Bhíma accordingly killed the elephant, and then told Drona that Aswattháma was dead. But Drona was convinced that Bhíma was telling a falsehood; and in his anger he slew ten thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry, and would have destroyed all the armies of the Pándavas, had he not been restrained by the gods and Rishis who reminded him that he was a Bráhmaṇ. Drona, however, was still disturbed by the idea that Aswattháma might be dead, and accordingly asked Yudhishtira, who had never been known to tell a falsehood. Yudhishtira accordingly intended to say:—"Aswattháma is dead; not indeed the man but the elephant." No sooner, however, had he uttered the first part of the sentence than Krishna and Arjuna sounded their war-shells with all their might, and Drona only

Krishna suggests the lie.

Krishna suggests a prevarication.

Manner in which Yudhishtira is said to have told a lie.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Drona dies in
the character of
a Bráhmán
Yogi.

Escape of his
soul through his
skull.

3rd. Karna's
command—two
days.

Three important
combats.

heard the words:—"Aswattháma is dead!" At the same time Drona was assailed by evil omens. His left eye began to quiver, his left hand began to shake, his heart grew weak, and tears flowed from the eyes of his horse. He still, however, continued fighting until Bhíma again assured him that Aswattháma was dead. Believing now that his son was really slain, he stripped himself of his arms, and sat upon the end of his chariot cross-legged like a Yogi. He then drew up all the breath of his body into a spot in the neighbourhood of his heart, and drove it into his head, upon which the top of his skull was burst open, and his soul escaped through the orifice like a ray of the sun. Dhrishta-dyumna then rushed upon the expiring body and cut off the head. The terrible story of the revenge of Aswattháma for the slaughter of his father will appear hereafter.

By the death of Drona the Kauravas were once more deprived of their Generalissimo, and Karna was elected to succeed to the command. Karna only held this post for two days, namely, the sixteenth and seventeenth of the war; but within this brief period are crowded some of the most decisive events in the great struggle. The most important combats which took place during Karna's command were as follows:—

1st, The battle between Karna and Yudhishthira.

2nd, The battle between Bhíma and Duhsásana.

3rd, The crowning battle between Karna and Arjuna.

The story of these incidents is as follows:—

Now Drona had been slain in the fifth day of his command, and on the fifteenth day of the war; and when it was evening the Kauravas assembled together and elected Karna to be their Generalissimo in the room of Drona. Next morning the Kauravas, commanded by Karna, again went out to battle on the plain of Kurukshetra; and there was a great slaughter, and the rivers flowed with blood, and the whole plain was covered with corpses; and when it was evening the battle was stayed, and the Pándavas and Kauravas returned to their respective camps. Now after nightfall Duryodhana summoned Karna, and Duhsásana, and Sakuni, and many others to Council, and said:—"This is the sixteenth day of our war with the Pándavas, and some of our greatest Captains, such as Bhíshma and Drona, have been slain to our great reproach." Karna then smote his hands together, and said:—"It has so happened that the Pándavas have escaped with their lives from my attack this day, but you shall see how I will deal with them to-morrow, as well as with their army; for I have determined with myself either to slay Arjuna and his brethren to-morrow, or to lay my head level with the ground." At these words Duryodhana and the other Kauravas returned with great elation of mind to their several quarters.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Election of
Karna to be
Generalissimo
of the Kauravas.

Sixteenth day
of the war, and
first of Karna's
command.

Indecisive
struggle.

Karna engages
to slay Arjuna.

On the morning of the seventeenth day, both armies bathed and perfumed themselves, and arrayed themselves in all their splendour; and they all said to each other:—"This will be the great day of the war, and whoever comes out safely from this day's battle will be like one who is born again." And when both armies had been drawn up in opposite ranks, Karna ascended his chariot, and drove to the chariot of Duryodhana, and said:—"This is the day on which I will slay Arjuna, and now if I do not kill him you shall never see me again: But Arjuna has Krishna for his charioteer; and if Sálya, the Raja of Madra, will drive my chariot, I shall be certain to get the better of Arjuna, for if any one in all this army can match Krishna in driving, it is Sálya." So Raja Duryodhana went with some of his brethren to the quarters of Sálya, and Sálya was not yet

Seventeenth day
of the war and
second of
Karna's com-
mand.

Karna desires
that Sálya
would drive his
chariot.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Duryodhana
makes the re-
quest to Sálya.

mounted for the battle; and he received Duryodhana with every mark of respect, and seated him on the same couch with himself." Duryodhana then said to Sálya:—"There is not in my army this day a single person who is equal to you, and just as the Pándavas pride themselves upon having Krishna, so do I pride myself upon having you: Now I have a particular request to make to you: To-day Karna is to combat with Arjuna, whose charioteer is Krishna, and we have no one among us who can drive like Krishna excepting yourself: My request is therefore that you will mount Karna's chariot this day, and drive it for him; and then Karna will certainly be the conqueror of Arjuna."

Sálya's indigna-
tion.

When Sálya heard this speech he threw himself into a great rage, and rising up from his seat, he struck his hands together, and said:—"O Duryodhana, I have committed one great fault, that when I was going to join the Pándavas I suffered myself to be persuaded to join your army; and

He sneers at the
birth of Karna
as the son of a
charioteer.

now I am punished by being asked to be a charioteer to Karna, who is himself the son of a charioteer: I have a hundred persons in my service who are quite equal to his father, and shall I make myself a servant to him?" So saying, Sálya went out in a rage, but Duryodhana and his brethren followed him, and said:—"We all of us respect you as our Chief, and we know that there is no one equal to you in either army save Krishna alone: We did not invite you to be charioteer to Karna out of disrespect, but because such a condescension on your part would ensure us the victory; and surely it would be no more derogatory for you to drive the chariot of Karna than it is for Krishna to drive the chariot of Arjuna." Sálya replied:—"Since you rank me with Krishna I am satisfied; and I will drive Karna's chariot provided he obeys my orders and does as I shall direct him." And Duryodhana agreed to the condition, and he and all his brethren paid many compliments to Sálya. So Sálya rose up and went towards Karna's chariot, and he said to Karna:—"At the request of Duryodhana I have consented to drive your chariot on the condition that you will not swerve from my advice." Karna answered:—

Duryodhana
assures Sálya of
his respect, and
asks him with
Krishna.


“As Sîva was charioteer to Brâhma, and Krishna is HISTORY OF
charioteer to Arjuna, so have you now conferred a similar INDIA.
favour upon me.” PART II.

Karna then ascended the body of the chariot, and Sâly drives
sounded his shell and beat his drum; and he said to Sâly:— Karna against
Arjuna.

“Drive speedily, I pray you, to the chariot of Arjuna, for I
have nothing to do with Yudhishtira, or Bhîma, or the
other Pândavas, but with Arjuna only.” And Sâly drove
off the chariot; and when they had gone a little way the
four horses suddenly halted of their own accord, and a bone Evil omens.

fell upon Karna from the air, and it could not be seen from
whence it came. And Karna said:—“O Sâly, these are bad
omens, and I much doubt if I shall return in safety from this
battle; but I have no intention of returning, so drive me
against Arjuna and Krishna, and God’s will be done.” Then
Karna went to the field of battle, and there arose a conten-
tion between Karna and Sâly, for Sâly would vaunt the
prowess of Arjuna, and declare that Karna would be alarmed
at the twanging of his bow. And Karna replied in a rage:—
Contention be-
tween Karna
and Sâly re-
specting the
prowess of
Arjuna.

“I have heard a description of the people of your country
of Madra, and you measure me by what you are yourself:
In your country, wives and mothers, sisters and daughters,
brothers and uncles, all commune together without modesty
or shame, and eat flesh and drink wine until they are drunk,
and then all dance together in a medley; and if their enemy
pray for quarter they continue fighting until they have killed
him; and if the enemy prove victorious, they sacrifice their
wives and children to him without shame or concern: But I
have taken you with me to assist me in this conflict, not to
try and terrify me with Arjuna, and be a cause of mischief
to me: If your heart be right towards me, conduct me at
once to Arjuna, and you shall then see how I will deal with
him; but if you mean to deceive me, descend from the cha-
riot before the battle begins, that I may get another driver
in time, and do what I have to do; for if during the combat
I see any sign of treachery in you, I will certainly slay you.”
And Sâly, hearing these words, began to drive Karna to-
wards the ranks of the Pândavas.
Karna retorts
by a reference
to the depraved
customs of
Sâly’s subjects.

Now when Karna charged the Pândavas, Arjun  Karna charges

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Karna attacks
Yudhishtira in
the absence of
Arjuna.

Reproaches
Yudhishtira
for the coward-
ice he had im-
bibed from
Bráhmans.

Wrath of Yud-
hishtira at
being left with-
out protection.

Anger of Yud-
hishtira with
Arjuna for fight-
ing Susarman
when he should
have been fight-
ing Karna.

Arjuna taunted
by Yudhishtira.

Draws his
sword, and
threatens to kill
Yudhishtira.

again gone away to fight against Susarman and his brethren ; and Karna bore down upon the Pándavas, and pressed on to the spot where Yudhishtira was, and commenced a battle with him. And at first Yudhishtira wounded Karna in the breast, but Karna pressed him hard ; and the people of Yudhishtira placed him on a fleet horse to favour his escape ; but Karna pursued him, and pulled him off the horse by the neck, and said :—" Had you been a true Kshatriya and son of a Raja, you would never have turned your back upon the field of battle ; but as you have spent so much of your time amongst Bráhmans, and have borrowed their disposition and manners, you cannot stand in the field against men of courage : Take therefore to your heels, for why should I slay you ? Though had you been Arjuna I would have put you to death without hesitation." So Karna turned about, and left Yudhishtira upon the ground ; and Yudhishtira was presently removed by his own people, but he bitterly reproached Bhíma and Dhrishta-dyumna for having suffered him to be so greatly dishonoured in the absence of Arjuna. Then Bhíma fell upon Karna, and a great battle ensued, and Karna once again bore down like a lion upon the ranks of the Pándavas. Meantime Arjuna had conquered Susarman and his brethren ; and hearing that Karna was making great havoc he became alarmed for his elder brother Yudhishtira, and desired Krishna to drive him back to the side of Yudhishtira. And Krishna did so, and Yudhishtira was rejoiced to see them, for he thought that Arjuna had left him to fight Karna. When however Yudhishtira heard that Arjuna had merely gone away to fight Susarman, he was in a great rage ; and he taunted Arjuna with having fled from Karna, and bade him give up his weapons to Krishna, and take himself the place of charioteer, so that Krishna might go out and fight against Karna. Then Arjuna was furious at the reproaches of Yudhishtira, and drew his sword, and would have killed him on the spot, had not Krishna interposed and prevented him. Arjuna then cried out :—" I have vowed to kill any man who should tell me to lay aside my arms, and therefore I must kill the Raja what-

ever guilt I may incur." But Krishna said:—"Away with you and your speech for threatening to kill your Raja! Have you never read the Vedas, or heard that any one who attempts the life of his father, or elder brother, or Raja, will never see Swarga, for that God's anger will be kindled against him, and a perpetual curse fall upon him?" Then Arjuna was much abashed, and said:—"How am I to escape from my guilt; I am compelled to break my resolution to kill any one who desired me to lay down my arms, and I have threatened the life of my Raja and elder brother." Krishna answered:—"The satisfaction of Raja Yudhishthira will absolve you of both, and that satisfaction depends upon your slaying Karna." Krishna then went to Yudhishthira and interceded for Arjuna, and cast Arjuna at his feet, and the two brothers were again reconciled.

Reconciled to
Yudhishthira
by Krishna.

All this while Bhîma had engaged in a deadly conflict with Karna and Duryodhana; when Duryodhana's brother Duhsâsana came up to their aid, and shooting an arrow from one side, he slew Bhîma's charioteer. Now Duhsâsana was that wicked Kaurava who had dragged Draupadî into the gambling pavilion, and treated her like a slave girl; and Bhîma had sworn a great oath that the day should come when he would drink the blood of Duhsâsana. And when Bhîma saw Duhsâsana he was filled with wrath; and he aimed such a stroke at Duhsâsana with his mace, that he drove him, chariot and all, to the distance of a bow-shot; and Duhsâsana fell with such force to the ground that he broke all his bones, whilst his chariot was dashed to pieces. Duhsâsana trembled for a moment, and began to give up the ghost, when Bhîma running up to him lifted him from the ground and whirled him round his head, and shouted with a loud voice:—"O Kauravas! Behold Duhsâsana has come to the aid of Karna, and see how I have smitten him: Whoever of you has sufficient strength and courage, let him come and release Duhsâsana from my hands!" No one however dared to approach, and Bhîma continued thus:—"This day I fulfil my vow against the man who insulted Draupadî!" Then setting his foot on the breast of Duhsâsana.

Bhîma attacked
by Duhsâsana.Deadly conflict
between Bhîma
and Duhsâsana.Bhîma's address
to the Kauravas.Fulfills his vow
by drinking the
blood of Duhsâsana.

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sásana, he drew his sword, and cut off the head of his enemy; and holding his two hands to catch the blood, he drank it off, crying out:—"Ho! ho! Never did I taste anything in this world so sweet as this blood." At this sight the Kauravas began to weep very bitterly, whilst the Pándavas rejoiced; and the Kauravas threw away their arms and fled, saying:—"This is not a man, for if he were he would not drink human blood!"

Arjuna goes
forth to a final
battle with
Karna.

Meantime Arjuna had gone forth in his chariot, with Krishna for his charioteer, to fight against Karna; and this battle was the most famous in all the war. And when Arjuna and Karna beheld each other they sounded their war-shells, and prepared for a terrible combat; for each one was determined either to conquer his enemy, or to give up the ghost upon the plain. And all the warriors in both

The armies stop
fighting, and the
gods descend
from heaven.

armies gave over fighting and stood round to see the great battle; and all the gods came down from heaven to behold the contest between Arjuna and Karna; and Karna said to Sályā:—"This day now be so careful of myself and my chariot, that the whole world may resound with your commendations." Arjuna also said to Krishna:—"You know full well the valour and prowess of Karna; I therefore beseech you so to manage my chariot that Karna may find

Arjuna and
Karna address
their respective
charioteers.

no occasion of advantage over me." Then the battle commenced, each one shooting arrows at the other from his own chariot, whilst all the armies of the Pándavas and Kauravas looked on; and for a long time no man could say who would gain the day. At length Arjuna was so wounded and stunned by the arrows of Karna that he would have been defeated, but at that moment one of the wheels of

battle.

A wheel of
Karna's chariot
sinks into the
earth.

Karna's chariot sunk deeply into the earth, and it would not stir, notwithstanding all that Sályā could do to urge the horses to the utmost. And Karna leaped from his chariot to relieve the wheel, and cried out to Arjuna:—"Hold your hand for one moment, to give me the chance of recovering my wheel; for it is no mark of manhood to strike at me whilst I am in this extremity." And Arjuna stayed his hand, but Krishna cried out:—"O Karna, what you say is

Arjuna stays
from fighting.
Krishna re-
minds Arjuna of
the insults to
Draupadi and
murder of
Abhimanyu.

true enough, but where was the manhood when Draupadī was insulted in the midst of the assembly, and when you and five or six more surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and put him to death without pity?" When Arjuna heard this allusion to the slaughter of his son, the fire of wrath burst from his eyes and nostrils, and he drew forth an arrow with a broad sharp blade at the end shaped like a crescent; and he discharged it with all his strength whilst Karna was endeavouring to release his chariot-wheel, and it struck the neck of Karna and severed his head from his body.

Arjuna slays
Karna with a
crescent-shaped
arrow.

Then the Pándavas beat their drums, and sounded the trumpets of triumph, but the Kauravas were filled with great grief and consternation; for they said that they had no other hero now that Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna were numbered with the slain. And they fled in all direc-

Triumph of the
Pándavas and
consternation of
the Kauravas.

tions like scattered sheep, and Duryodhana tried to rally them against Arjuna, but in vain. And Kripa said to Duryodhana:—"Those heroes upon whom you depended for

Flight of the
Kauravas.

Kripa advises
Duryodhana to
conclude a
treaty.

success are now no more: I therefore advise you to enter into a treaty with the Pándavas: From what I know of the character of Yudhishtira I do not consider that it is too late to propose peace: If you make your intentions known to him, he will still be glad to share the Raj with you; whereas it would be folly for you to continue this destructive war." Duryodhana replied:—"I am perfectly aware of your friendship for me, and of the services rendered by you in this very war: I know that what you say does not proceed from any selfish motive, but from a pure regard for my own welfare; but I cannot act according to your counsel, as a man who is destined to die will not follow the advice of a physician: After all the wrongs I have inflicted upon the Pándavas, with what face can I now ask for a treaty? I am therefore resolved to carry on this war, be the consequences what they may." And the whole army of the Kauravas was filled with new life by this speech of Duryodhana; and their despair left them, and they resolved that on the morrow they would renew the attack upon the Pándavas.

Refusal of
Duryodhana.

The Kauravas
resolve to renew
the battle on the
morrow.

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Review of the
foregoing nar-
rative of Karna's
command.

The foregoing narrative of the war during the two days in which the command was held by Karna scarcely calls for much consideration. On the first day the two armies confined themselves to general charges, but the second day is filled with single combats which seem to have decided the fortunes of the war. The battles between Karna and Yudhishthira, Bhíma and Duhsásana, Arjuna and Karna, are all curious and interesting, but seem to require no explanation.³

4th, Sálya's
command—only
day.

The narrative of the eighteenth day of the war, and single day of Sálya's command, is as follows:—

Election of Sálya
to be General-
issimo of the
Kauravas.

Now on the evening of the seventeenth day of the war, being the day in which Karna was slain by Arjuna, the Kauravas appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo in the room of Karna. And Duryodhana said to Sálya:—
“The time has come when friends and enemies are to be tested: I considered you as my friend; do you therefore prove yourself to be such by accepting the post of Generalissimo.” And Sálya replied:—“I am ready to do as you

³ The description of the battle between Arjuna and Karna is overlaid in the original by many supernatural details, and it may be convenient to record in a note the seven mythical circumstances to which the death of Karna is ascribed by Náráda the sage.

1st, He is said to have surreptitiously induced Parasu Ráma, the Brahmanical hero, to teach him the Brahmanical mode of archery, which ought only to be imparted to a Bráhmaṇ, after which Parasu Ráma prayed that the archery might fail him in battle.

2nd, He was cursed by a Bráhmaṇ for having killed the man's calf while aiming at a deer, that the earth should arrest his chariot-wheel in battle.

3rd, He had given to Indra the golden cuirass and earrings with which he had been born. This myth is connected with the fable that he was begotten upon Kuntí by the Sun god.

4th, He had presumed to be the rival of Bhíshma.

5th, He had disobeyed his assumed mother Kuntí by fighting Arjuna.

6th, His enemy Arjuna was steadily assisted by Krishna throughout the battle.

7th, When Karna shot a snake at Arjuna instead of an arrow, Arjuna was saved from certain death by Krishna, who miraculously lowered the chariot, and thus prevented the snake from doing more than cut off Arjuna's tiara.

order: My Raj, my wealth, and my life, are all at your service: I accept the post you offer me, and I promise that the sun when it sets on the morrow shall either see you without an enemy upon this earth, or else see me slain upon the plain of Kurukshetra." And Duryodhana and the remaining Kauravas rejoiced as they heard the words of Sálya, and they set up a loud shout which reached the camp of the Pándavas; and Yudhishtira, hearing that the Kauravas had appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo, issued the necessary orders for renewing the battle on the morrow, which would be the eighteenth day of the war. Then both armies retired to rest, and slumbered until the dawn of morning.

Now the eighteenth day was the last of the great war, and the Kauravas, seeing that their numbers were few, made a new rule, that no man should engage in single combat with any of the Pándavas, but that all should fight together in support of the common cause. Then the battle commenced, and both sides fought desperately; and Yudhishtira engaged with Sálya, and slew him after much fighting. And the Kauravas were beaten on all sides, and Duryodhana, seeing that all was lost, fled secretly from the battle like one distracted, but he still carried his mace in his hand.

Eighteenth and last day of the war.

Kauravas abstain from single combats.

Sálya slain by Yudhishtira.
Utter defeat of the Kauravas.

Now there was a lake in the plain of Kurukshetra, and Duryodhana possessed a charm by which he could remain under water for as long as he pleased, so he plunged into the lake, and no man knew where he was concealed. Meantime all the warriors on the side of the Kauravas were slain, excepting three only, namely, Kripa, Aswattháma, and Kritavarman; but these three continued fighting with the Pándavas, until they saw that Duryodhana was no longer present in the field. Then they said one to another:—"We are fighting the battle of Duryodhana, but lo, he himself is not to be found: Wherefore then should we expose ourselves to the last extremity for nothing? Let us go and look for Duryodhana!" So the three warriors left the field of battle and searched for Duryodhana all over the fatal plain of Kurukshetra; and the Pándavas in like manner searched for Duryodhana, but they could find no trace of him, and accord-

Duryodhana conceals himself in the lake.

Three survivors

General search for Duryodhana.

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The three Kaurava warriors discover Duryodhana, and pray him to renew the battle.

Duryodhana declines; and recommends concealment.

Aswattháma vainly remonstrates.

Failure of the Pándavas to discover Duryodhana.

Bhíma's servants discover him.

The Pándavas proceed to the lake.

ingly returned to their own quarters. Meanwhile the three Kaurava warriors were told that Duryodhana had concealed himself beneath the waters of the lake, and they went to the side of the lake, and cried out:—"O Raja, arise out of the water, that we may still do battle in your service, and under your auspices make another struggle for victory." Duryodhana replied with a loud voice:—"I see you all three from where I am, and I thank God that he has preserved your lives; but his favour is now with the Pándavas, and it is not advisable for us to continue the contest against them: Do you therefore remain in quiet, until I shall see what turn may be taken by the hidden events of futurity." Aswattháma replied:—"Be not too much troubled by the slaughter of your armies, for while we three are in your service, we are still able to slay a thousand such as the Pándavas; and if you will only come out of this lake we will avenge you completely upon your enemies."

Meantime Yudhishtira had sent many men in all directions to procure tidings of Duryodhana, but they had all returned without finding him. And Yudhishtira and his brethren were very uneasy, and they said one to the other:—"All the anxieties and fatigues we have endured during this war are of no avail so long as Duryodhana is missing; for whilst he lives he may yet find means to raise another army, and renew the war against us." Now it so happened that at this time some of the servants of Bhíma, who had gone out to hunt game for their master's supper, had come to the lake to drink water; and they overheard this discourse between Aswattháma and Duryodhana, and discovered that Duryodhana was concealed in the lake; and accordingly they hastened away to carry the news to the Pándavas that they might obtain a reward for their discovery. When the Pándavas heard that Duryodhana had been found, they were overjoyed, and bestowed great rewards upon the servants of Bhíma, and all set off at once for the lake. And when Aswattháma and Kripa and Kritavarman saw them coming, they said to one another:—"If Duryodhana would join us we would certainly fight them, but as we have no

leader it is useless to expose our lives." So the three warriors hid themselves in a great tree, whence they could see all that took place; and the Pándavas came up to the side of the lake, and Yudhishtira called out with a loud voice:—"O Duryodhana, you have caused the death of so many thousands of people, that it is now shameful in you to hide yourself at the bottom of this lake: You fought manfully enough at first; so come out now and let us see whether God will give the victory to you or to us: A man of your rank ought not to turn his face from a challenge: Why do you, being a Kshatriya, care so much for your own life after the sacrifice of the lives of your friends and relatives?"

Duryodhana replied:—"I did not enter this lake from fear; but as all my people have been killed, and my arms and chariots are all broken in pieces, and my charioteer is slain, and I myself am extremely weary and worn out, I am come hither to rest and refresh myself a little, and when I am somewhat recovered, I will come out and renew the contest with you."

Yudhishtira replied:—"Our ease and comfort for to-day is to fight with you: Come out therefore and fight us, and if you conquer, go and take your ease upon the throne: The refreshment you would now take at the bottom of the lake is too mean for you."

Duryodhana answered:—"My Raj consisted of my brethren, and friends, and kinsmen; and now that they are gone, what sort of Rajaship can I exercise? Take you the Raj, and I wish you joy of it, for your brethren are all still living, and most of your friends and your troops still remain to serve you: Even now, if I

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Yudhishtira
calls upon Duryodhana to leave
the lake.

Duryodhana
prays for rest be-
fore renewing
the combat.

Yudhishtira
demonstrates

Duryodhana
prays the Raj,
demonstrates
Raj, and his
nature to the
court.

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Duryodhana offers to light the Pándavas one at a time, if they will fight fairly.

if you offer me the whole earth: I must establish my rights by conquering you: You cannot save your life by these tempting offers to me: If you and I remain alive, people will be doubtful of the result of this war."

On hearing these words, Duryodhana smote his hands together under the water, and was almost provoked to come out from the lake; but he restrained himself, and again cried out with a loud voice:—"You know full well that I have neither friend nor brother remaining, nor even a chariot to mount upon for the purpose of battle; nor have I armour, nor bow and arrows, nor sword, nor spear wherewith to enter into combat with you; nor have I anything now remaining save my mace: So if you all attack me at once, you will kill me in a moment: But if you will bind yourselves to fight me only one by one, I will accept the challenge and come out and kill you all; and you must engage to fight me fairly, and not make use of any stratagem or foul play against me: If then you will agree to these terms, and promise not to swerve from them, I will fight you; and as the sun overpowers the stars, and eclipses their light with his light, so shall my light outshine you all."

Yudhishtira accepts the conditions.

Yudhishtira replied:—"Now you have spoken in a manner worthy of yourself and your own dignity, and we will engage ourselves by oath not to go from the promises we will make you: If you will fight us alone, as you now say, and shall conquer us, your name and honour will redound to the world's end, and every one who shall survive you and us will make a proverb of your prowess, and say:—"Raja Duryodhana slew all the five brethren, and so secured to himself the empire of the world."

Duryodhana stipulates to fight with the mace only.

Duryodhana then said:—"I am on foot, and have no weapon here save my mace: Whoever fights with me must therefore only use that weapon, and must fight on foot like myself; and then, even if Indra were to combat me with the mace, I am certain to come off conqueror."

Yudhishtira agrees.

Yudhishtira answered:—"Whatever mode you propose we will agree to, so come out now, and take your choice as to which of us you will fight with."

Now though Raja Yudhishtira repeated these assurances a hundred times, Duryodhana continued to repeat the conditions which he demanded, without making any advance towards coming out of the lake. So Yudhishtira said to Krishna:—"You see that this man merely holds us at bay with fair speeches." And Krishna answered:—"If you would have Duryodhana come out of the lake in good earnest, you should desire Bhîma to speak to him; for he will never bear with Bhîma's provoking words, but will speedily come out of the water." Then Yudhishtira commanded Bhîma to call upon Duryodhana to come out; and Bhîma cried out with a loud voice:—"O Duryodhana, how long do you mean to shelter yourself by falsehood? We have consented to every condition proposed by you; why then do you delay making your appearance? If you hope to deceive us by these speeches, and to escape from us with your life by such artifices, it will be of no avail; for if you are determined not to come out, I will myself enter the water and haul you out by main force."

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Duryodhana still remains in the lake.

Krishna advises Bhîma to provoke Duryodhana to leave the water.

Bhîma's irritating address to Duryodhana.

Duryodhana answered:—"What you are now doing is altogether improper for a Kshatriya: You say that it is fair and right for a Kshatriya to accept every challenge that is offered him: Now I do not say that I will not fight you, but I say that it is now mid-day, and I wish to rest a little, and on the morrow I will fight you in any way you may desire."

Duryodhana offers to fight on the morrow.

Bhîma then said:—"O Duryodhana, you speak of the rules which Kshatriyas should follow, but what rules did you observe when you ordered poison to be given to me, and when you plotted to burn us alive in the city of Vâranavata, and when by foul play at the gambling match you stripped us of our all, and compelled us to go into exile, and caused Draupadî to be dragged into the assembly by the hair of her head? But it is something that even in your dying hour you can call to mind the true principles of a Kshatriya: A hundred curses be upon that life to which you have sacrificed all your brethren and their families, and the venerable Bhîshma, and your tutor Drona, and your best

Bhîma threatens to drag Duryodhana out of the lake.

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friend and companion Karna; and yet, wonderful depravity, you still wish to live; but I promise you that unless you leave the lake without delay I shall enter the water and bring you out with my own hand."

Duryodhana
leaves the lake.

When Duryodhana heard these provoking words of Bhíma, he could no longer endure them, but lifted his head from the water; and he sighed so loudly that the sound was heard a mile off. Then taking his mace in his hand he

Laughter of the
followers of the
Pándavas.

walked out of the water towards the Pándavas. And all the followers of the Pándavas laughed at him, crying out:—

"Look at the Raja who possessed such mighty armies! See how he moves!" And Duryodhana was in vehement wrath at their laughter, and cried out:—"What do you sneer at? I will now slay you all, and turn your laughter to tears." Then he advanced with his mace, and he ap-

His ghastly ap-
pearance.
Yudhishtira
offers him arms
and armour.

peared so grim and ghastly that men took him to be Yama. When he came nigh, Raja Yudhishtira said to him:—"I will provide you with all weapons, and whatever else you may require." And every kind of weapon and armour was immediately made ready and placed before Duryodhana. Then Duryodhana took up a golden cuirass

Question of who
should fight
Duryodhana.

and put it on, and said:—"One man should oppose one man, but come on as it is your own wish, and I will fight you all together." Yudhishtira answered:—"If one man should oppose one man, how was it that so many of you surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and killed him amongst you?" Duryodhana made no reply, and Yudhishtira said to Krishna:—"If you speak the word I will go and fight him myself." Krishna answered:—"You are no

Krishna sug-
gests Bhíma.

match for Duryodhana with the mace; so do not expose yourself to be killed for nothing: It is a common proverb that we must use a stone to break a stone: So do you command Bhíma to go and fight Duryodhana, for he is his equal." Bhíma came forward at these words, and said:—

Bhíma gladly
assents.

"Only send me, and under your auspices I shall certainly slay Duryodhana; and if he had his whole army with him I would kill them all: So let me go and take my revenge on him." Then Krishna and all the others applauded Bhíma;

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PART II.

Krishna advises
Bhima to com-
mit foul play.

battle began, each striking at the other with his mace, or leaping in the air, or stooping to the earth to avoid a blow whilst all the people were standing round and looking on. And many a time the one or the other was beaten violently to the ground, whilst the noise of the blows reached to the sky, and the blood streamed from their bodies from the waist upwards. And Krishna said to Yudhishtira and Arjuna:—"Bhima is superior to Duryodhana in strength of limb, but Duryodhana is his superior in agility and knowledge of the mace, and will certainly gain the victory, unless Bhima changes his mode of fighting." Then Krishna hinted that Bhima should fulfil the vow, which he had made when Draupadī was insulted, that he would smash the thigh of Duryodhana; for otherwise not only would Bhima be beaten by Duryodhana, but each one of the remaining four brethren would be in like manner beaten after him. Krishna also said:—"If, when Duryodhana came out of the water, ~~Raja~~ Yudhishtira had not agreed to the conditions which he proposed, then you, O Pándavas, might have surrounded him and put him to death in the same manner that the Kauravas surrounded Abhimanyu and slew him; but now there will be no end to the feud, for during all the thirteen years that you were in exile, Duryodhana has been ever practising himself in the use of the mace, saying to himself:—'If the Pándavas should overpower my armies, and kill every man of them, I will still fight them one after the other with this mace, and be the death of them all.' In this manner he has rendered himself superior to Bhima; and there is no other remedy but this little foul play of striking his thigh, which you must hint to Bhima to put into practice." So Arjuna cast a significant look towards Bhima, and struck himself upon the right thigh with his hand, and Bhima immediately comprehended his meaning, and began to shift and feint with his blows; but Duryodhana, by his prodigious alertness, avoided every stroke. At length they came to closer quarters and struck heavily at each other; and Duryodhana gave Bhima so violent a blow upon the head that all present thought he was killed;

Arjuna gives the
hint to Bhima.

Bhima nearly
killed.
Smashes the
thigh of Dur-
yodhana.

when Bhîma suddenly jumped up and laid about him in all directions, until at last, when Duryodhana was leaping about to aim another blow, Bhîma struck him so violently upon the right thigh, that it smashed the bone, and Duryodhana fell heavily to the ground, and the earth shook like a cup of quicksilver.

When Bhîma saw that Duryodhana had fallen, he began to strut and wheel round him like a war elephant, and coming up to him he kicked him on the forehead with his two feet, saying:—"You have now received the retribution of all the abominable acts you have committed against us, and all your offences against Draupadî." And again Bhîma kicked him on the head twice or thrice. Then Raja Yudhishtira was exceedingly wroth at the conduct of Bhîma, and struck him a severe blow in the face with his fist, saying:—"A curse be upon you! What villany is this, to expose us all to be evil spoken of by all the world, who will condemn us for ever for this baseness?" Yudhishtira then ordered Arjuna to take Bhîma by the arm and thrust him away; and Yudhishtira came forward weeping very bitterly and took the hand of Duryodhana, and said:—"This evil you have brought upon yourself: We have all acknowledged you to be our lord, and would have served you with our lives and our hearts, but you bore malice against us, and drove us from our house and home into utter ruin: Even then we would have been content with five villages, but you refused us, and desired our deaths, and forced us to go to war with you: But still you are our lord, and we acknowledge you to be our sovereign; and the curse of God will therefore rest upon this act of Bhîma; and if you command me, I will even order him to be put to death for it: Be not however concerned at your present condition, for it is your certain passport to eternal paradise; but as for our lot, it is hard indeed, for all those whom you leave behind you, all your wives and children, will curse and condemn us for your fate."

With these words Raja Yudhishtira again wept profusely, but by this time Balarâma had risen up and ap-

Bhîma kicks
Duryodhana on
the head.

Wrath of Yud-
hishtira.

Yudhishtira
strikes Bhîma in
the face.

Addresses
Duryodhana.

Balarâma
rises up and ap-
pears.

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PART II.

Balaráma pre-
pares to slay the
Pándavas, but is
prevented by
Krishna.

Krishna defends
Bhíma.

Balaráma de-
nounces Bhíma.

Krishna excuses
Bhíma.

Bhíma forgiven
by Yudhishtira.

The Pándavas
go with Krishna
to see Duryod-
hana.

Recriminations
between Dur-
yodhana and
Krishna.

proached Duryodhana; and when Balaráma saw that his thigh was broken, he cried out to the Pándavas:—"In fighting with the mace, it is contrary to all rule to strike below the waist; and since in an open contest for the Raj, you are guilty of foul play, and transgress the laws of the combat, I will slay you all." And Balaráma took the ploughshare and the pestle, which he always carried with him as his weapons, and prepared to attack the Pándavas, and they all fled from before him; and he pursued them in great wrath, when Krishna caught him in his arms, and said:—"O brother, these Pándavas are our kinsmen and are worthy men; and in the present case Bhíma has not transgressed the rule of fighting, because Duryodhana had long ago incurred the blame by foul play with the dice, when Bhíma swore in the presence both of Duryodhana and Yudhishtira, that he would break the thigh of Duryodhana, and he has now only fulfilled his vow: Moreover, the Kauravas are all slain and gone, and if you now slaughter the Pándavas to whom will you give the Raj?" Balaráma answered:—"You say that these men are in the right; but how could I look on and see Bhíma set his foot upon the head of Duryodhana?" And Krishna tried his best to explain away the evil act; and he refused to release Balaráma until he had sworn to work no further ill against the Pándavas; and Balaráma made the promise and was released, and he immediately mounted his chariot, and went his way to Dwáraká.

When Balaráma had departed from the plain of Kurukshetra, Bhíma came forward and threw himself at the feet of Raja Yudhishtira, and implored pardon for the evil he had committed against Duryodhana; and Krishna and Arjuna, and all the rest who were present, came up and solicited the Raja for his forgiveness, which at last they obtained. Then they all went in a body to the spot where Duryodhana was lying, and they sat down around him. Duryodhana then charged Krishna with having been the cause of the death of Drona, and the death of Karna, and with having given the signal to Bhíma to strike him on the thigh contrary to the rules of fair fighting; and Krishna

retorted by recapitulating all the wrongs committed by Duryodhana against his kinsmen, and especially with the affront offered to Draupadī, and the cruel murder of the stripling Abhimanyu. Duryodhana replied:—"I governed my Raj with so much justice that the wolf and the lamb drank water from the same pond, and none ever demanded a thing from me that I did not bestow upon him: No one before me had conducted a government so well as myself, nor will any one who may follow me be able to equal it; and I now beseech the Almighty that he will give me in eternity that lot which shall be the just retribution of my conduct." Whilst Duryodhana was thus speaking, flowers fell from heaven upon his head, and celestial music was heard in the sky; and when the Pándavas perceived these things, their faces all turned pale, and they were seized with trembling.

Manifestations
of the divine
approval of
Duryodhana.

Then Krishna, seeing that the Pándavas were all downhearted, said to them:—"You are now become Rajas, and have obtained the Raj at the point of your own swords, what is it therefore that you fear? Take the government into your own hands, and administer justice to the ryots and to all those who are oppressed, and for all your good efforts God will reward you in the other world." Krishna then sounded his shell with all his might, and proclaimed the reign of Raja Yudhishtira; and he made known that all who had risked their lives in support of the Raja should be exalted with due honours and rewards. And all the people who were present rejoiced greatly, and filled the air with their acclamations, crying out:—"Long live Raja Yudhishtira!"

Krishna con-
soles the Pánd-
vas, and pro-
claims Yud-
hishtira as
Raja.

After this the Pándavas and their friends mounted their chariots and proceeded towards the camp of the Kauravas, leaving a few persons behind to look after Duryodhana. And when they arrived at the camp of their enemies, they found no one there save a few old people; and they entered the quarters of Duryodhana, and saw so many jewels, and so much gold and spoil of all kinds, that their eyes were dazzled with the sight.

The Pándavas
proceed to the
camp of the
Kauravas and
obtain great
spoil.

Yudhishtira
requests Krish-
na to proceed to
Hastinapur, and
excuse the pro-
ceedings of him-
self and
brethren to the
Mahárája.

Then Yudhishtira said to Krishna:—"I would have

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Krishna reaches
Hastinápura on
the first quarter
of the night.

Interview be-
tween Krishna
and the Mahá-
raja.

wished to have paid a visit to Mahárája Dhritaráshtira and the Rání Gándhári, and to have excused ourselves as much as possible to Gándhári, who is a woman of the strictest virtue, and of a sound religious character, and who has always shown me great kindness: But now night has come on and I cannot wait upon her, and I am afraid that when she shall hear the news that all her sons are slain, she may utter a curse against us so that we all perish: I therefore pray you to go to Hastinápura alone to-night, and soothe her all you can, and do not let her unawares pronounce a curse upon us." Krishna replied:—"What you have said is perfectly proper." And he immediately set off for Hastinápura, and arrived there before one quarter of the night was spent; and he waited upon Dhritaráshtira, whom he found seated in his palace, and went and took his hand and kissed it. And the blind Mahárája immediately guessed who he was, and said:—"It is Krishna!" And Krishna answered:—"Yes." Then Dhritaráshtira began loudly to weep and to wail, saying:—"O Krishna, do you approve of the slaughter of my sons?" Krishna answered:—"Your heart is your eye, and nothing can be concealed from you, and you must be aware that what has occurred to your children is from the great god Siva, and not from me nor from the Pándavas." Dhritaráshtira said:—"I cannot but acknowledge this, and at present patience is my only remedy: But I am in great pain for Duryodhana's death, on account of his mother Gándhári; because women are naturally not so patient as men are: She must have heard of the slaughter of her sons, and she will be very miserable: So do you now go and visit her, and comfort her as well as you are able; perchance she is already dead with anguish."

Affecting inter-
view between
Krishna and the
Rání Gándhári.

Now whilst Krishna was preparing to go to the Rání, Gándhári herself entered the door, and all in tears said to him:—"O Krishna, had you no compassion for me, and did you deem it right that all my sons should be slaughtered?" And with these words she fell down in a swoon. And Krishna's heart burnt within him, and he burst into tears, fearing that Gándhári was really dead, and he called for

some sweet odours and sprinkled them upon her face. And Dhritarashtra also came and laid Gándhárí's head upon his knees, and after a considerable time she began to revive. Krishna then said to her:—"You are not as other women are, so as to lose all power of patience and resignation; or not to know that there is no remedy against the will of Providence: Were you not always aware from the conduct of your two sons, Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana, that such a day as this must certainly await them? Will you not allow of yourself that in all this business no one is to blame but your sons? You yourself know what counsel I gave to Duryodhana, when I came here as ambassador from the Pándavas: Now consider that these Pándavas are also your sons, and have done nothing but in self-defence; and that what has befallen your own sons is only what your sons were desirous of inflicting upon the Pándavas: You are a woman of great understanding; say now whether what has befallen your sons can be attributed as a crime to any one but Duryodhana: Do not therefore make a useless clamour, but submit with patience, and eternal paradise will hereafter be your portion from God: You are a woman of that profound sanctity, that if you were only once to utter a curse against the whole world, God would for your sake involve it in destruction; but if, seeing that your sons are already slain, you should now curse the Pándavas, who will fulfil every filial duty to you and your husband a thousand times better than was done by your own sons, what advantage could possibly accrue to you?"

Gándhárí listened attentively to all these arguments, and said to Krishna:—"I pray God to bless you for having awakened me from the state of grief in which I was plunged by the loss of my children, so that I was very nearly uttering a curse against the Pándavas: But I am now aware that what you have said is just and right, and that I have no remedy but resignation: But now you must take care of this aged, blind, grief-stricken, broken-hearted husband of mine; and do not let too much evil overwhelm him, nor his enemies work their will upon him."

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Krishna consoles Gándhárí by engaging that the Pándavas should prove more dutiful than the Kauravas.

Gándhárí's reply to Krishna.

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Krishna renews
his promises.

Returns to the
quarters of the
Pándavas in the
camp of the
Kauravas.

Review of the
foregoing narra-
tive of the last
day of the great
war.

Mythical refer-
ences to Krish-
na.

Extraordinary
counsel of
Krishna that
Bhíma should
strike a foul
blow.

Deaths of the
three heroes of
the Kauravas
ascribed to the
immoral inter-
ference of
Krishna.

Krishna answered her:—"Fear not, for Raja Yudhishthira will perform every filial duty to your husband Dhritarashtra a thousand times better than was ever done by Duryodhana; and the Mahārāja will be a thousand times better treated by the Pándavas than ever he was by his own sons; and if Duryodhana and Duhshāsana were your sons, Yudhishthira and Arjuna will be your slave." And Gándhārī was consoled by these words of Krishna; and Krishna then returned to the Pándavas, who had taken up their quarters for the night in the camp of the Kauravas; and he entered the presence of Yudhishthira and related to him all that had occurred during his visit at Hastinapur.

The foregoing narrative of the events of the last day of the great war is deeply interesting, but calls for little comment. The mythical references to Krishna are however singularly suggestive; both as regards his strange counsel during the battle between Bhíma and Duryodhana, and his mythical mission to Hastinapur at the conclusion of the war. Upon the former point it may be remarked that Duryodhana had hitherto displayed a peculiar enmity towards Krishna; or, to use a later and more mythical form of expression, he had ever opposed the worship of Krishna, and disbelieved in his divine nature. For some strange reason, which can scarcely be fathomed, the deaths of the three leading heroes of the Kauravas are ascribed to Krishna's interference, although each case involved a moral delinquency. He caused the death of Drona by suggesting the lie which was told as regards Aswattháma. He caused the death of Karna by counselling Arjuna to shoot an arrow when Karna was trying to raise his chariot-wheel from the earth. Finally, he suggested the foul blow with the mace beneath the waist by which Duryodhana was mor-

tally wounded by Bhīma. Accordingly the divine hero is bitterly reproached by Duryodhana for these offences; and the difficulty is to understand why the Brahmanical compilers should have attributed such undoubted deviations from morality to their own particular deity. Possibly they desired to transfer the guilt from responsible heroes to an irresponsible Supreme Being. The narrative of Yudhishtira's lie, of Arjuna's unfair shot, and of Bhīma's foul blow, may have been related in the original tradition, without any reference to Krishna, and without any attempt at palliation, simply because at that early period they were not opposed to the moral sense of the community. In the Brahmanical age however such deeds were by no means creditable to the national heroes; although when changed to religious mysteries, and ascribed to an incarnation of the Supreme Being, they might be treated as acts which mere humanity could not venture to praise or condemn.

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Krishna reproached by
Duryodhana.

Origin of the
myth.

The mission of Krishna to console the blind Mahārāja Dhritarāshtra, and the Rānī Gāndhārī, for the slaughter of their sons, and, above all, to reconcile the bereaved pair to the murderers of their sons, is a circumstance which is far more in accordance with the religious character of Krishna, who is not unfrequently represented as a consoler in times of sorrow and suffering. Indeed, the tone of thought which prevails throughout this portion of the poem sufficiently indicates its later origin; and it may be safely passed over as a pure invention and interpolation of the Brahmanical compilers.

Krishna appears
in his mission to
Hastinapur in
the character of
a consoler.

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The three warriors leave Duryodhana upon the plain.

Aswattháma sees an owl kill the sleeping crows.

Resolves to fall upon the Pándavas in like manner.

Kripa remonstrates.

Aswattháma persists in revenging the slaughter of Drona.

out regret." So saying, the strength of Duryodhana again failed him, and he fainted away from weakness and pain.

After Duryodhana had thus appointed Aswattháma, son of Drona, to be Chief and Commander in his own stead, the three warriors took leave of the dying Raja and went their way. And they sat down under a tree to consult what they should do; and Aswattháma said:—"I have already received the orders of the Raja to slay all the Pándavas this very night, and I must now do something or forfeit my head." And Aswattháma saw that a large number of crows were roosting in the tree; and presently an owl came, and killed the crows one by one, without alarming the others.

And Aswattháma said to his two companions:—"This owl instructs me how to act towards my enemies if they be too numerous: It is to kill them by night one after the other, without making any noise that will disturb the rest: Give me your advice! Shall I go and fall upon our enemies, particularly upon Dhrishta-dyumna, who slew my father Drona?"

Kripa replied:—"You are well aware that Duryodhana will now certainly die, and we have already done very much in his service: My opinion is that we should betake ourselves to Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira and the Rání Gándhárí, and mention this scheme to them; and then if they order us to set about it we should do so, but that otherwise we should not move in the matter." And both Kripa and Kritavarman strongly urged Aswattháma, but he would not listen to them, saying:—"These people have slain my father, and I am confident that they will all be sleeping after their victory; and if I do not watch this opportunity for revenge, I am very sure I shall never meet with another; and the grief that now overburthens my heart will never be assuaged as long as I live: If I conquer in this effort it is well; otherwise if I am killed I do not care: So do not interrupt me, but leave me to my purpose: In the beginning of the war I ought not to have taken up arms at all, because I am a Bráhmaṇ; and I should have occupied myself in study and prayer: But now that I have launched my life upon the torrent of war, I must fight to some purpose: The least that

I can do is to revenge my father's blood upon his enemies, and if I do not accomplish this, what can I say for myself?" Kripa replied:—"Since you are so sore upon your father's death, I pray you to remember that it is wrong to fall upon our foes unawares: Stay now till morning, and we will all three go and fight the Pándavas fairly, and see to whom the great god Siva will give the victory: Let us sleep now, and to-morrow set our faces to the battle." Aswattháma said:—"Rage will not let me sleep, but you may go to sleep and welcome." Kripa answered:—"I only advise you that it is a most enormous crime to slay people in their sleep; for the rest, do as you please." Aswattháma said:—"What you have counselled is very true, but however much I strive with myself, I cannot let the slaughter of my father go unpunished; and if I can but accomplish the death of Dhrishthadyumna, let what may come to pass, be it going to heaven or going to hell."

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Kripa proposes to wait till morning, and then to fight the Pándavas fairly.

Aswattháma refuses.

When Aswattháma had done speaking, he rose up and harnessed his horses to his chariot, and he put on his armour and drove off; and when Kripa and Kritavarman saw that advice had no effect upon him, they both followed after him.

Aswattháma, followed by Kripa and Kritavarman, proceeds to the camp of the Pándavas.

And Aswattháma went straight to the camp of the Pándavas. Now Raja Yudhishtira and his four brethren were at that time in the camp of the Kauravas, where they had found much spoil, and had taken up their quarters for the night; but their five sons by Draupadí, and all the other Chieftains of the army, were in their own camp, sleeping soundly in their several quarters in perfect security, and Draupadí also was sleeping in the camp. Now the camp of the Pándavas was surrounded by a deep trench, so contrived as to have only one gate or entrance; and there was no way of entry on any other side. And when Aswattháma came to the gate he saw that his two friends were following behind; and he requested them to stay and guard the entrance, whilst he went in and worked his revenge. He then passed through the gate without seeing any one; and went straightway to the quarters of Dhrishthadyumna; and he saw Dhrishthadyumna sleeping in splendour with all his women sitting

Absence of the Pándavas in the camp of the Kauravas.

The single gateway.

Aswattháma leaves his two friends to guard the gate whilst he enters the camp.

Surprises Dhrishthadyumna and slaughters him.

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Screaming of the women, and general confusion.

about him. And the women were thunderstricken at the approach of Aswattháma, and he went and kicked Dhrishta-dyumna on the head, and awoke him from his sleep. Then Dhrishta-dyumna beheld Aswattháma standing before him with a drawn sword, and he cried out:—"What cowardice is this to fall unawares upon a naked man!" And Aswattháma struck him on the head with the back of the sword and broke his skull. Then the women began to scream and Aswattháma rushed out, and no one knew who he was; but the people of Dhrishta-dyumna, who had come out with drawn swords on hearing the alarm, seeing a man rush out from the quarters of their Chief with a naked sword, ran hastily after him. And Aswattháma killed a great number of them, and in their confusion many of them killed each other.

The five sons of the Pándavas rush out and are slain by Aswattháma.

Now it so happened that Draupadí had come into the camp that very night with her five sons whom she had borne to the Pándavas. And the young men were roused by the noise and alarm, and hearing that some one had killed Dhrishta-dyumna, who was the brother of their mother, they armed themselves and ran out to revenge him. And Aswattháma fell upon the five sons of the Pándavas one after the other, and cut them down and slew them one after the other. And all the camp was in horrible confusion, and the people, as they rushed out from their several quarters, fell upon each other in their alarm; and fathers slew their sons and sons their fathers, and no man knew what was done either by himself or by the others. And every one who tried to escape by the gate of the camp was cut down and slain by Kripa and Kritavarman, whom Aswattháma had posted there. And Aswattháma found a great pile of firewood in the camp, and he set it on fire, and by the light of the flame he discovered and slew very many. And the horrors of that night surpassed all that had occurred during the eighteen days of the war, for Krishna and the Pándavas were sleeping far away in the quarters of Duryodhana, but all their followers and servants innumerable had been left behind in the camp of the Pándavas. And Aswattháma cut off the heads of the five sons of

earful slaughter amongst the flowers and servants of the Pándavas.

Aswattháma escapes with the heads of the five sons of the Pándavas.

Draupadí, and carried them in his hands; and he made his escape through the gate of the camp, and joined Kripa and Kritavarman, and he boasted that he had avenged his father's blood, and proposed that they should return to Duryodhana, and acquaint him with their victory.

After this the three warriors proceeded to the spot where they had left Duryodhana; and on their way they saw the wolves and the jackals devouring the bodies of those who had been slain in the great war, as they lay on the plain of Kurukshetra. When they approached the Raja, they found him fallen in the midst of blood and dust, but with a portion of his senses still remaining, and they sat down near him and began to weep. Then Duryodhana looked up and knew who they were, and he made signs with his hand to ask them whence they came. Aswattháma said:—"A curse be on us for being alive while you are in this state: Nevertheless, I have brought you something which even yet will give you joy." Hearing this, Duryodhana, notwithstanding his weakness, raised himself up and asked what he had got. Aswattháma answered:—"I have this night killed all the five Pándavas with their whole army, and here are their five heads." When Duryodhana heard these words he leaped up a full cubit from his place, and said:—"Do you really speak truth?" Then Aswattháma produced the heads, and Duryodhana desired that they should be shown to him one by one, which was done; and as the day had not fully dawned, and as the heads of the five sons of the Pándavas were perfect semblances of their respective fathers, Duryodhana thought as he beheld them in the hands of Aswattháma that they were the real heads of the Pándavas. And Duryodhana said:—"O Aswattháma, you have entirely taken away my grief, and now give me Bhíma's head into my own hand." And Aswattháma gave him the head of Bhíma's son; and Duryodhana took it and squeezed it with all his might, until the skull burst in. Duryodhana then said:—"Alas, Aswattháma, this can never be the head of Bhíma, which must be vastly too strong and hard to be broken between my hands." And Duryodhana then asked for the

The three warriors return to Duryodhana.

Aswattháma passes off the heads of the sons for the heads of the fathers.

Exultation of Duryodhana.

Duryodhana takes the head of Bhíma's son, and discovers the imposture by crushing the skull.

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Reproaches
Aswatthāma for
the murder of
the innocent
sons.

Death of Dur-
yodhana.

Flight of the
three warriors.

Yudhishtira
falls down in a
swoon.

His lamenta-
tions.

Krishna con-
soles him.

other heads, and examined them, and he perceived that they were the heads of the sons of Draupadī, and not those of her husbands; and he instantly fell into the most profound grief, and exclaimed:—"O Aswatthāma, you have done a horrid deed in slaying these harmless youths, and thus cutting short my whole race: Had these young men lived they would have preserved our name alive: My enmity was against the Pándavas, and not against these innocents." Saying this Duryodhana leaned his head upon the knees of Kritavarman and immediately expired. And the three warriors looked on and wept; and then reflecting that the Pándavas would soon discover the mischief of the night, and hasten to pursue them, they said to each other:—"Raja Duryodhana is now dead, and the Pándavas will presently come and take away his body, and this is no place for us." So each one mounted his chariot and fled.

Now when Aswatthāma had taken his revenge in the camp of the Pándavas, one quarter of the night still remained; and the chariotéer of Dhrishta-dyumna mounted his master's chariot and set off for the camp of the Kauravas; and at day-break he arrived at the quarters of Yudhishtira and his brethren, and informed them of all that had occurred. Then Raja Yudhishtira fell down in a swoon, and all his brethren thought him dead, and began most bitterly to bewail him; but Krishna consoled them, and said that Yudhishtira was certainly alive, and ordered some perfumed water to be brought, and sprinkled it plentifully on his face. After some time Yudhishtira came to himself, and turning his face towards Krishna, he said:—"What grief upon grief is this that comes on us every moment? This unfortunate Draupadī, who for thirteen years has endured for our sakes so many miseries and afflictions in the jungle, has no sooner come into the camp, and seen her sons and kinsmen, than the worst of all calamities has befallen her in the loss of her brother Dhrishta-dyumna and all her five sons: I much fear that this misfortune will cause her death." Krishna answered:—"The decree of the great god Siva is without remedy, and there is now no resource but resignation; and

it is your duty to return him thanks for your own preservation, and to live in hopes that he will bestow upon you other children." Raja Yudhishtira then sent his brother Nakula to bring Draupadī that he might comfort her. And when Draupadī came she was weeping very bitterly; and she said to her husbands :—" You have been wandering thirteen years in the desert and jungle in the hope at the end to enjoy the happiness of having your children about you; and now that you have seen Abhimanyu, and all my five sons, slain by your enemies, have you still the inclination to be Rajas, and to rule the world and flaunt upon thrones?" Yudhishtira and Krishna both replied to her, saying :—" You are the daughter of a great and wise Raja, and there are now no such women in the whole world as Kuntī and Gándhārī: You should first reflect upon the number of sons and brothers and other kinsmen they have lost in this great war, and not act like other women who have no reflection, and whose example leads you to make this outcry." Then Draupadī was somewhat consoled, and she replied :—" I feel myself tranquillized by your words, but can you with all your valour and prowess hold it allowable that the son of a Bráhmaṇ, like this Aswattháma, should slaughter my brother and sons with impunity?" She then turned to Bhíma, and said :—" Can you, stout as you are, permit Aswattháma to do all this mischief without suffering for it? If you do not bring me his head let me never see your face again." Yudhishtira answered her :—" Aswattháma is a Bráhmaṇ and the son of our tutor Drona: If he has committed any crimes, Vishnu, who is superior to all gods, will certainly avenge it on him; and what good will it do you to have him slain? Will it bring your sons and brother to life again? Leave him to God, for Vishnu will certainly revenge on him the wrong he has done to you and us." Draupadī said :—" I will not then insist upon his death, but I have heard that he has upon his head a precious jewel that will illuminate the darkest night and protect its possessor against every enemy; and that jewel

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Yudhishtira
sends for Draupadī.

Draupadī de-
cries the idea of
her husbands
ruling as Rajas.

Consoled by
Yudhishtira
and Krishna.

Prays for re-
venge upon
Aswattháma.

Yudhishtira
represents that
Aswattháma
is the son of a
Bráhmaṇ, and
that revenge
must be left to
Vishnu.

Draupadī per-
sists in having
an amulet be-
longing to As-
wattháma.

HISTORY OF INDIA: PART II. you must take from him and give it me, and the loss of it will be worse to him than the loss of his life."

Arjuna deprives Aswattháma of the amulet, and gives it to Bhíma.

Bhíma consoles Draupadí, and gives her the amulet.

At these words of Draupadí, Bhíma mounted his chariot and set off in pursuit of Aswattháma, and Arjuna and Krishna followed after. And Arjuna and Krishna overtook Aswattháma on the banks of the Ganges, and compelled him to give up the jewel. And the jewel was given to Bhíma. And Bhíma went to Draupadí, and found her in tears, and he said to her :—" O Draupadí, do you not remember that day when the Kauravas insulted you and drove us all out of the city of Hastinápura, and when I came to you and bade you not to grieve, for that the day should come when their own wives should dishevel their hair in sorrow for their husbands? Then you said that you would not care if all your sons were slain, and all your husbands save one, so long as that one could revenge your affliction upon the Kauravas: Now all we five brethren are alive, and all the Kauravas are slain, and their wives are dishevelling their hair for them, according to your wish: What better then could have happened than for your sons to be slain in battle and so go to paradise? And here too is Aswattháma's jewel for you, which you demanded; so take it, and give thanks to God." Then Draupadí was entirely consoled by these words, and she took the jewel and gave it to Yudhishtira, saying :—" Yudhishtira is now the Mahárajá, and it becomes him to wear this jewel upon his head." So Yudhishtira wore the jewel on his head, and it appeared as resplendent as the sun, and all the people cried out :—" Long live Mahárajá Yudhishtira! "

Draupadí transfers the amulet to Yudhishtira.

Procession of the blind Mahárajá, with all the women of his household, to the plain of Kurukshetra.

Their interview with the three surviving warriors of the Kaurava armies.

Meanwhile Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira, together with his wife Gándhárí, and his brother's widow Kuntí, and all the women of the family, set out to behold the field of Kurukshetra where the great war had been fought between the Kauravas and the Pándavas. And as they journeyed they met with the three warriors, Aswattháma, Kripa, and Kritavarman, who had worked such terrible mischief in the camp of the Pándavas. And the three men said to Dhritaráshtira :—" Your sons engaged in a desperate war, and are now gone to the mansions of Indra; and our whole army is destroyed,

and we are the only three survivors." Kripa then said to Gándhárí:—"O Rání, your sons have fought so bravely, that they are now enjoying happiness and glory in the mansions of Indra: Lament not therefore for them! Nor have the Pándavas obtained an easy victory, for we three entered their camp in the night time, and slew their sons and many of their heroes: Take comfort therefore and permit us to depart, for we are flying for our lives from the Pándavas." So saying the three took their leave and proceeded towards the river Ganges; and on their way they parted from each other and followed three different directions; and then it was that Arjuna came up with Aswattháma, and took from him the jewel.

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The Kauravas said to have ascended to the heaven of Indra, because they had died fighting bravely.

The terrible picture which the foregoing narrative calls up to the imagination comprises, perhaps, some of the most graphic scenes in the history of the war. After many days of battle and slaughter, the plain of Kurukshetra was as silent as death. The sounding of war-shells, the beating of drums, the shouts of combatants, and the shrieks of the wounded, had passed away. The plain was covered with the corpses of the fallen; and amongst them the dying Chieftain of the Kauravas was lying upon the bare earth in mortal agony of mind and body, but thirsting like a wounded tiger for the blood of his enemies. Meantime, the triumphant Pándavas and their party were reposing in two camps on either side of the lake; the five brethren in the deserted camp of their defeated enemy, and their family and followers in their own camp. Of all the forces of the Kauravas none remained alive excepting Aswattháma and his two associates; and at evening time these three warriors paid a visit to the prostrate Duryodhana. The talk then was only of revenge. The dying Raja passionately called upon Aswat-

Review of the foregoing story of the "Revenge of Aswattháma."

Appearance of the plain of Kurukshetra on the evening of the last day of the war.

Passionate desire for revenge exhibited by the surviving Kauravas.

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Comparison
between the
massacre by
Aswattháma
and the most
barbarous inci-
dents in the
war.

tháma to go and slay all the Pándavas, and, above all, to bring him the head of Bhíma, that he might die without sorrow; and Aswattháma was equally prepared on his part to revenge the defeat of his Raja and the death of his father.

The subsequent vengeance of Aswattháma forms, perhaps, one of the most barbarous incidents of the war. One horrible night has indeed been described, during which armies mangled and slaughtered each other beneath the glare of torchlight, and carried about with ghastly exultation the bleeding heads of friends and kinsmen. Again, the scene in which Bhíma drinks the blood of his murdered enemy is revolting to the last degree. But in both cases the passions of the combatants were stirred up to the highest pitch by the fury of the hand-to-hand struggle. The massacre, however, in the camp of the Pándavas was widely different. It was revenge inflicted upon sleeping and unarmed men, and upon sons instead of fathers; and, perchance, a more hateful form of vengeance has scarcely ever been perpetrated.¹

Effect of the
appearance of
the owl devour-
ing the birds
upon the mind
of Aswattháma.

At sunset on the evening of the last day of the great war, Aswattháma and his two associates were sitting beneath a tree. Aswattháma was burning for wholesale vengeance, whilst smarting under a sense of weakness and helplessness. To a rude warrior, who implicitly believed in omens as lessons or warnings, the incident of an owl pouncing upon the birds, one at a time, as they were sleeping upon a tree, could not fail to produce a marvellous effect. "Thus," he cried, "will I slay the Pándavas!" He accordingly entered the Pándava camp, leaving

¹ A scene somewhat similar is to be found in Homer (*Iliad*, Book x.), where Diomed and Ulysses surprise the Thracian camp.

his two companions to guard the only means of entrance or exit. Then followed the attack upon the sleeping Dhrishṭa-dyumna, the slaughter of the naked man, the midnight panic, the horrible confusion of friends and foes, the escape of the murderer with the five heads of the sons of the Pándavas, and the dreary walk over the plain at early morning, when the first light of dawn just disclosed the wolves and jackals who were still feasting upon the bodies of the slain.

But another scene was yet to follow, which no one could have portrayed or imagined saving an Oriental bard who could fully sympathize in the joy of gratified revenge. In the dim light of early morning the three warriors once more stood by the side of the dying Raja. For a brief interval Duryodhana was deceived. For a brief interval he was led to believe that the heads of his hated kinsmen were before him; and forgetting his wounds and losses, he rejoiced in the completeness of his revenge. He took the supposed skull of his murderer, and crushed it between his hands; and then the truth suddenly flashed upon him. The light of the rising sun fell upon the countenances of the dead, and he saw that the heads were those of the sons and not of the fathers. Thus his joy was turned to the deepest grief, and he leaned upon the knees of Kṛitavarman, and expired in an agony of sorrow.

Pleasure of gratified revenge as displayed in the dying hour of Duryodhana.

The concluding portion of the narrative of Aswattháma's revenge has been so hopelessly falsified by the Brāhmanical compilers that it is wanting not only in poetical justice but in human interest. The story of Aswattháma's jewel or amulet appears

Mythical character of the fable of Aswattháma's amulet.

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to be a myth. Probably in the original tradition Bhíma pursued Aswattháma to the death, and brought his head to Draupadí. As, however, Aswattháma is said to have been a Bráhmaṇ, the fable of the jewel has apparently taken the place of the story of the murder; as the slaughter of a Bráhmaṇ would be especially offensive to the Brahmanical compilers.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RECONCILIATION OF THE LIVING AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

A NEW scene now opens in the story of the Mahā Bhārata, namely, the reconciliation between the blind Mahārāja and the men who had murdered his sons. This reconciliation is said to have been previously effected by Krishna during his night visit to Hastināpur; but, as already indicated, this portion of the narrative appears to be an interpolation of modern date. Like most of the mythical accounts of Krishna it contains some beautiful expressions of sympathy; but at the same time it is evident that such a mission would be ill-timed and useless. It is also worthy of remark that a similar visit is ascribed to the officious Vyāsa, and is of course equally mythical in its origin and character. Indeed, the language of both Krishna and Vyāsa is strained and artificial. It is impossible to conceive that parents, whose sons were still lying dead upon the field of battle, could be consoled by the assurance that those sons had perished in consequence of their injustice; or by the still more extravagant assurance that the murderers would take the places of those sons, and would prove themselves to be even more loyal.

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Attempts to
reconcile the
Mahārāja with
the Pāndavas.
Mythical efforts
of Krishna and
Vyāsa.

Impossibility of
a real reconcilia-
tion between
parents and the
murderers of
their sons.

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Want of family
sympathy on the
part of the
Brahmanical
compilers.

Interview be-
tween the Pán-
davas and the
Mahárája on the
day after the
war.

Necessity for a
feigned recon-
ciliation.

Real feelings of
the Mahárája
and Rání.

Narrative of the
reconciliation.

The Pándavas,
accompanied by
Krishna, go out
and meet the
Mahárája.

obedient. Such an idea may be justly regarded as the ignorant conception of some Brahmanical compiler, who had led a life of celibacy, and who was utterly unable to realize that enduring affection and unreasoning devotion which the true mother feels for the worst of her sons. But the story of the interview between the Mahárája and the Pándavas on the day after the battle seems to fall under a different category. The Pándavas were victors who had established their claim to the Raj against the sons of the Mahárája by force of arms, but who were yet desirous of appearing to be on good terms with the Mahárája whose sovereignty they would be expected to acknowledge. The Mahárája, on the other hand, although nominally the Sovereign, was virtually the representative of the defeated party, and his very life was at the mercy of the conquerors. Thus whilst a real reconciliation was perhaps impossible, a feigned reconciliation was absolutely indispensable to both parties. Accordingly, it will be seen that the Pándavas prostrated themselves in turns at the feet of the Mahárája and the Rání, and that some sort of explanation or apology was offered and accepted; but the real feelings of the bereaved parents will be readily perceived from an attempt of the Mahárája to crush Bhíma in his embrace, and from the sudden shriek of the Rání that the smell of her son was upon them.

The narrative of this reconciliation, real or feigned, is as follows:—

Meantime Yudhishtira had heard that Mahárája Dhritarashtra had left the city of Hastinápura for the field of battle; and he went forward to meet him, accompanied by his brethren and by Krishna, and by Draupadí, and by all the

women of Dhṛiṣṭa-dyumna. And after a while, Yūdhishthira saw the Mahārāja approaching; and all the women of the Kauravas accompanied the Mahārāja, and rent the air with their lamentations; and Yūdhishthira passed by the women, and went on to the Mahārāja, and fell at his feet. Then the other Pāṇdavas, each one declaring his name to the blind Mahārāja, fell at his feet in like manner. And Dhṛitarāshtra embraced Yūdhishthira, and said:—"Where is Bhīma?" Now as it was well known that Bhīma had slain Duryodhana, as well as a great number of the sons of Dhṛitarāshtra, Krishna had been fearful of introducing him, lest the aged Mahārāja should vent his wrath upon him. And it so happened that in former days Duryodhana had ordered to be made an image of Bhīma, upon which image he was accustomed to try his strength; and when the Mahārāja called for Bhīma, Krishna gave him this image, and said:—"Here is Bhīma." Then the Mahārāja opened his arms, and under pretence of embracing Bhīma, he crushed the image to pieces; and he then fell down exhausted and fainting, with blood issuing from his mouth. After a long time he came to himself and began to weep; and when those around him asked why he wept, he replied:—"Bhīma was as one of my own sons, and his death has not brought any of my other sons to life, and I have slain him to no purpose." Then Sanjaya, his charioteer, who stood by, told him what Krishna had done, and how it was not Bhīma that he had crushed, but the iron image which Duryodhana had made. And Dhṛitarāshtra turned to Krishna, and said:—"O Krishna, you have done excellently well." He then called for the five brethren one by one, and again embraced them; and when Bhīma presented himself, the Mahārāja laughed, and said:—"What if I should now give you another squeeze?" Bhīma replied:—"I am your slave, and if you order me I will be my own executioner." Dhṛitarāshtra said:—"You are now all my sons, and the only remaining children of my brother Pāṇdu: All that has happened to my sons was of their own seeking, and arose from their envy against you." And Dhṛitarāshtra began to weep again, and Yūdhish-

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Prostrate themselves at the feet of the Mahārāja.

The Mahārāja calls for Bhīma, and receives his image in his stead.

Crushes the image to pieces in his wrath against the murderer of his sons.
Repents the deed, and weeps.

Undeceived by Sanjaya.

Embraces the five Pāṇdavas in turn.

The reconciliation.

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thira and Krishna and all the others began to weep with him.

Affecting scene
between the
Pándavas and
the Ráni Gánd-
hári.

After this Yudhishtthira and his brothers, together with Krishna, took leave of the Mahárajá and proceeded to wait upon Gándhári. Yudhishtthira advanced and kissed her feet, and she took him in her arms, and they both wept aloud. Gándhári then said:—"The smell of Duryodhana is upon you all;" and screaming out she fell down in a swoon.

Yudhishtthira's
excuses.

When she recovered Yudhishtthira said to her:—"O mother, it must be clear to you that we had no alternative in the affair of Duryodhana; for what could we do when he would not allow us bread to eat as the condition of our service?"

Gándhári's re-
signation.

Gándhári replied:—"Say nothing, O Raja, about it, for I know that you speak only what is true and right, and that all which has befallen my sons was but the fruit of their refusal to take the advice of myself and my husband; and now that they are gone, may God preserve you to me in the room of Duryodhana." Arjuna then came and kissed her

She reproaches
Bhíma for hav-
ing drank the
blood of Duhsá-
sana.

feet, as did Bhíma also; and Gándhári said to Bhíma:—"You drank the blood of my son Duhsásana."

Bhíma's denial.

Bhíma replied:—"No, I did not drink it: I took some of it in my hands and rubbed it about my face, but I did not drink it; and I only said that I drank it for the sake of frightening the others." At this moment Raja Yudhishtthira stopped

Yudhishtthira
takes all the
blame upon him-
self.

forward, and laid his head at the feet of Gándhári, and said:—"O mother, it was I who killed your sons, and do you lay

all the blame upon me, and say nothing to the others." Gándhári then asked for Draupadí, and said to her:—"You

and I are in the same affliction, for your sons also are slain; but what can I do? There is no remedy against the behests of the great god Siva." She then said to Yudhishtthira and his brethren:—"It is now nearly fourteen years since your

Gándhári sends
the Pándavas to
their mother
Kuntí.

mother Kuntí had the pleasure of seeing you: Go now and see her!" And the five Pándavas went accordingly; and

Joy of Kuntí.

when Kuntí heard that her sons were coming she fainted for joy; and when Yudhishtthira and his brethren came up and found her in that condition, Yudhishtthira took hold of his mother's hand, and after a time she came to herself.

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Her five sons
lay their heads
at her feet.

Affecting meet-
ing of Draupadi
and Kuntí.

Gándhári pious-
ly consoles
Draupadi.

Review of the
foregoing narra-
tive.

Narrative of the
funeral cere-
monies on the
field of battle.

Difficulty as re-
gards the war
lasting eighteen
days.

And the sons of Kuntí came and laid their heads at her feet one by one, and she embraced and kissed each of them in turn, and wept at seeing the wounds they had received in the great war. Then Draupadí approached her, and Kuntí, knowing that her children had been so lately slain, wept for her; and Draupadí laid her head at Kuntí's feet and fainted away, and when she recovered, both the ladies wept so abundantly that all the bystanders were moved to tears. Meantime Gándhári came forward with all the widows of her sons who had been slain, and she said to Draupadí:—"Weep not, my daughter, for your sorrows are not greater than mine: We cannot tell what is decreed by fate: Thank God that the war is over, and weep not for the dead: Let us now perform the necessary rites for the souls of the departed."

The foregoing narrative requires no comment. A general truthfulness to human nature is perceptible throughout. The story of the image said to have been made of Bhíma may appear somewhat apocryphal, but yet is not altogether beyond the bounds of probability.¹

The next scene, which comprises the lamentations of the women on the field of battle, and the subsequent burning of the dead, is very affecting. One point however is open to question. If the war really lasted eighteen days, and the general burning of the bodies did not take place until the day after the conclusion of the war, the corpses of those who were slain in the earlier battles must have lain in a state of perfect putrefaction. The question, however, is

¹ Duryodhana is said to have made an iron image of Bhíma to try his strength upon it; or he may have made an ordinary figure-head to knock about as a manifestation of his hatred towards the original. In Mr Dickens' novel of "The Old Curiosity Shop," Quilp, the evil character of the story, purchases an old wooden figure of an Admiral, to represent Kit, whom he hates; and he strikes and mutilates the image accordingly. The incident is true to human nature, and merely exhibits the natural force of the imagination. A mob will in like manner burn the effigy of the object of their detestation.

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Sad procession of the women to the plain of Kurukshetra.

The women sit by the dead bodies of their husbands.

Lamentations of Gándhárí over her son Duryodhana.

Lamentations of the widows.

Performance of the funeral rites for the slain.

Collection of materials for the burning.

After this all the women dishevelled their hair, and offered up loud lamentations, and proceeded to the fatal plain of Kurukshetra; and there they beheld the dead bodies of their husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, who had been slain in the war. And each of the women went and sat down by the remains of him whom she had most loved, and whose death had caused her the greatest affliction. And Gándhárí and Kuntí, accompanied by Yudhishthira and Krishna, went to the dead body of Duryodhana; and when Gándhárí saw that it was her own son, she fell down in a swoon; and after a long interval she revived, and said:—“The wise and the learned always used to sit round this son of mine, and nearly all the Rajas of the earth took their stations near him, and prided themselves on it as a promotion, but this night the jackals alone have been his courtiers.” The widow of Duryodhana likewise came with her hair dishevelled, and placed her husband’s head upon her lap, and seated herself there; and Gándhárí said:—“This woman, whom neither sun nor moon were once worthy to look upon, see how she now sits here bare-headed!” There too was the widow of the son of Duryodhana, and the widow of Karna, and the widow of Abhimanyu, and many others; and Gándhárí and all those widows bemoaned their several relations with so many tears, that none of those who were present could refrain from joining them in weeping.

After this, Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira said to Yudhishthira:—“My son, be pleased now to order that all the dead bodies should be burned.” And Dhritaráshtira and Yudhishthira jointly requested Vidura to superintend the performance of the ceremony. And Vidura, who was the uncle of the Kauravas and Pándavas, and Sanjaya, the charioteer of the Mahárajá, and Yuyutsu, the only surviving son of the Mahárajá, and Dhaumya, the family priest of the Pándavas, all went out together to the field of battle. And they collected a large quantity of sandal and other odoriferous woods, and sweet oils, to form a pile on which to burn the

bodies of the principal warriors, such as Duryodhana, Karna, Abhimanyu, Drona, and others; and they also collected many thousand mule-loads of faggots and oil to burn the bodies of those of inferior note. And they ordered all the surviving charioteers of those Rajas who had been slain, to go through the plain and point out the corpses of their respective masters, so that such Rajas might be burned separately according to their rank. And they took with them a thousand cart-loads of cloths, some fine and others coarse, to wrap up the dead bodies before burning. Then Vidura, and those appointed with him, went over the plain of Kurukshetra; and they first took up with all reverence and ceremony the corpse of Duryodhana and burned it. Next the Rajas of the first rank were wrapped in fine linen and burned with perfumes; and amongst these were the other sons of Dhritarashtra, and the sons of Draupadî, and Abhimanyu, and Drona, and Karna, and the greater Rajas, such as Raja Drupada and his son Dhrishthadyumna, and Raja Virâta, and Raja Jayadratha, and Raja Sâlyâ, and many others. When this burning had been accomplished they kindled a mighty fire and burned all the remaining bodies therein. After this, Yudhishtira and his brethren, accompanied by Krishna, went to bathe in the Ganges according to the rule; and taking up a handful of water for each kinsman that had been slain in the battle, they sprinkled it in the name of the deceased; and Yudhishtira, at the request of his mother Kuntî, sprinkled some water in the name of Karna. And Raja Yudhishtira and his brother Arjuna grieved very much for the death of Karna; and the Raja ordered great charities to be distributed in the name of Karna, and he took under his own protection all Karna's women and young children, and provided for all his remaining dependents. And he called for one of Karna's sons, who was sixteen years of age, and wept in his presence very much for the death of Karna; and he gave him a large separate establishment and estate, and paid more attention to him than he did to his own sons; and he placed him under Arjuna to teach him archery and all other military exercises. And he showed also great tenderness and affec-

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Dead bodies of
the Rajas recog-
nized by their
charioteers.

Burning of the
Rajas of the first
rank.

Burning of the
remaining
bodies.

Bathing in the
Ganges, and
sprinkling of
water.

Sorrow of Yud-
hishtira and
Arjuna for the
death of Karna.

Kindness of
Yudhishtira
to all the
widows, chil-
dren, and de-
pendents of
Karna.

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Death of the
chief wife of
Karna.

Review of the
foregoing narra-
tive of the burn-
ing of the slain.

Refers to an
ante-Brahmanic
period.

No reference to
Sati nor satis-
factory allusion to
the Bráhmans.

tion to the rest of Karna's children, and entertained his widows with all the kindness of a near kinsman. But when the principal wife of Karna, and mother of most of his children, heard of the death of her husband, she heaved a deep sigh and expired; and the rest of Karna's widows were better provided for by Yudhishtira than even his own women, and they had regular appointments for their maintenance.

The picture furnished by the foregoing narrative of the burning of the slain apparently refers to a very ancient period of Hindú history. The prominent features are indicated with a realism which seems to have appertained to the original tradition;—the poor widows, with their long black hair dishevelled over their faces, sitting in an agony of grief by the corpses of those they loved; the charioteers searching over the plain for the remains of their masters; the dead bodies wrapped in cloths and burning with oils and perfumes upon the funeral piles.² But there is no reference to the hateful Satí,

² A more detailed account of the funeral ceremonies of the ancient Hindús will be found in the Rámáyana, and will consequently appear in the second volume of the present work. The whole ceremony bears a remarkable resemblance to the burning of Hector, which has thus been felicitously translated by the Earl of Derby (Iliad, Book xxiv.):—

“At length the aged Priam gave command:
‘Haste now, ye Trojans, to the city bring
Good store of fuel.’ * * *
He said:—and they the oxen and the mules
Yoked to the wains, and from the city thronged:
Nine days they laboured, and brought back to Troy
Good store of wood; but when the tenth day's light
Upon the earth appeared, weeping, they bore
Brave Hector out; and on the funeral pile
Laying the glorious dead, applied the torch.
While yet the rosy-fingered morn was young
Round noble Hector's pyre the people pressed:
When all were gathered round, and closely thronged,
First on the burning mass, as far as spread
The range of fire, they poured the ruddy wine,
And quenched the flames: his brethren then and friends
Weeping, the hot tears flowing down their cheeks,

no burning of the widows with their deceased husbands; and it is somewhat remarkable that the Bráhmans do not appear to have officiated upon the occasion. The only point however which requires explanation, is the extraordinary liberality and kindness displayed by Yudhishtira towards the family of Karna. It should however be remembered that according to the myth already indicated, Karna was the son of Kuntí before her marriage to Pandú; and consequently these details may have been inserted to prove that Yudhishtira was not wanting in duty to the family of his deceased elder brother.

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Account of the
liberality and
kindness displayed by Yudhishtira towards the family of Karna ascribed to a mythical origin.

Collected from the pile the whitened bones;
These in a golden casket they enclosed,
And o'er it spread soft shawls of purple dye;
Then in a grave they laid it, and in haste
With stone in ponderous masses covered o'er;
And raised a mound."

In the historic period a considerable refinement was introduced by the Greeks, inasmuch as the bodies of the slain were not burned but buried. Thus the Athenians who fell at Marathon were interred on the field of battle; whilst the bodies of those who fell in the first year of the Peloponnesian war were preserved, and ultimately arranged in coffins of cypress wood, according to tribes, and publicly buried with every honour in the fairest suburb of the city.—Thucydides, Book ii. c. 34, *et seq.*

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sembled Bráhmans were enraged, but they hung down their heads with shame and said nothing. And Raja Yudhishtira was very much dejected at what Chárváka had said, and in very mild terms he asked the Bráhmans for forgiveness, and requested them not to put him to shame, and even offered to put an end to his own life if they desired it. The Bráhmans replied :—" O Raja, we have said nothing against you, but wish you all joy and happiness : ' This person is not a Bráhman ; he is a wicked friend of Duryodhana in disguise : His name is Chárváka, and he is a Rákshasa by birth : Listen not to him, for he has spoken falsehoods ! "

Chárváka burnt to death by the angry eyes of the Bráhmans.

So saying, the Bráhmans looked upon Chárváka with angry eyes, and he fell upon the ground like a tree struck by lightning, and was burnt to ashes upon the spot.

Gratification of Yudhishtira at the acquiescence of the Bráhmans in his inauguration.

Enthroned facing the East.

Presence of his relations and friends at his inauguration.

Now when Yudhishtira saw that the Bráhmans were truly desirous that he should rule the Raj, he was much pleased ; and he cast aside all melancholy, and seated himself upon the golden throne with a cheerful heart, and with his face turned towards the east. And in front of him sat Krishna and Sátyaki upon seats of gold ; whilst upon either side of him sat Bhíma and Arjuna upon golden carpets. At a little distance off sat his mother Kuntí upon a throne of ivory, with Nakula and Sahadeva on each side of her. And Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira and his younger brother Vidúra, and the priest Dhaumya, took their seats upon carpets as bright as flame ; and near the Mahárajá sat his Ráuí Gándhárí, and his only surviving son Yuyutsu. And when they were all seated, Yudhishtira was solemnly inaugurated Raja by Dhaumya the Bráhman, who was the family priest of the Pándavas. And rice, which had been burnt by the sun, and white flowers, and pieces of earth, and gold, silver, and precious stones, were all brought before the new Raja, and he touched them according to the custom. And fire, and milk, and honey, and ghee, and the sacred shell, and leaves and twigs of sacred trees, were all brought in like manner, and duly placed before Raja Yudhishtira. And golden pots, and silver pots, and copper pots, and earthen pots, and pots made of precious stones, were all filled with

Ceremony of inauguration performed by Dhaumya the Bráhman.

Symbolical rites.

Pots of water from the sacred rivers.

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water from all the sacred places, and arranged for the ceremony. And Dhaumya, the family priest of the Pándavas, solemnly performed all the rites of inauguration under the direction of Krishna. And Dhaumya prepared a high place on which to offer sacrifice, and he kindled the fire for the offerings. And a tiger's skin was opened out before the sacrificial fire, and Yudhishtira and his wife Draupadí took their seats thereon; and Dhaumya prepared the homa for the propitiation of the gods, and poured it upon the sacred fire. After this the five purifying articles which are produced from the sacred cow, namely, the milk, the curds, the ghee, the urine, and the ordure, were brought up by Krishna, and the Mahárajá, and by the four brethren of Yudhishtira, and poured by them over the heads of Yudhishtira and Draupadí: and then, in like manner, they all brought up the pots of sacred waters, and poured the waters over the heads of the new Raja and his wife. And when this was done the music began to sound, and fill the air with harmonious strains, and the bards and eulogists raised their voices and chaunted aloud the praises of Raja Yudhishtira and the glory of his mighty forefathers.

High place prepared for sacrifice.

Yudhishtira and Draupadí seated upon the tiger's skin.

Offering of the homa.

The five purifying articles poured upon Yudhishtira and Draupadí.

Pots of sacred water poured over Yudhishtira and Draupadí.

Music sounded.

Bards and eulogists chaunt the praises of Yudhishtira.

Now all this while Raja Yudhishtira was in no way moved by all the honours thus bestowed upon him. Neither did he exult in his inauguration, nor was he elevated by the praises of the bards and eulogists. He underwent all the ceremonies with calmness and patience, and manifested neither signs of sorrow nor signs of joy. And when the rites had all been performed, he rose up and distributed without stint, and in the greatest profusion, the richest and most valuable presents to all the Bráhmans who had assembled at his inauguration.

Perfect equanimity of Yudhishtira.

His patience during the ceremonies.

Distributes large gifts to the Bráhmans.

In this manner Yudhishtira was installed Raja in his ancestral Raj of Bháratá; and when the installation was over, and the gifts had been distributed, he addressed the Bráhmans in the following language:—"The sons of

Yudhishtira's address to the Bráhmans.

Pándu, whether they possess any good qualities or not, must still consider themselves very fortunate, O Bráhmans, at being so much praised by you; and it is proper that you

Entreats the Bráhmans to accept the rule of Mahárajá Dhritarashtra.

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should grant to myself and my brethren any favour which we may ask of you : Mahárāja Dhritarāstra is our father, and we adore him as we do our most superior gods : If, therefore, you wish to serve me or my brethren, you cannot do that better than by placing yourselves under the rule of the Mahárāja, and endeavouring to promote his welfare : I myself live only for that purpose, now that I have slain all my kinsmen ; and if you have any regard for me or my party, you will show the same respect to the Mahárāja as you did whilst the Kauravas were alive : He is our superior lord, and the ruler of the Pándavas and their Raj : Forget not my special request that you should serve him." So saying Yudhishtira dismissed the Bráhmans.

Review of the foregoing narrative.

Two events distinct from each other.

The foregoing narrative refers to two distinct descriptions, which may perhaps be best considered separately ; namely, first the procession from the field of battle to the royal palace at Hastinápura ; and, secondly, the inauguration of Yudhishtira as Yuvaraja, or as a Raja ruling the people in the name of the Mahárāja.

First, the triumphant procession of the Pándavas.

Description of the umbrella and chámara as emblems of sovereignty.

The description of the return of Yudhishtira to the palace will be readily realized by all who are familiar with the Courts of Hindú Rajas. The especial emblems of Hindú sovereignty are the umbrella and the chámara. The umbrella may be called a canopy ; but it in no way resembles the canopy which is raised over the throne in European Courts ; but may be described as a large umbrella, richly decorated with gold and jewels, and often exceedingly beautiful in design and workmanship. The chámara is the tail of a Thibet ox, which is fixed into a handle, and employed to drive away flies. The picture is now complete. The Raja sitting in state in a chariot or car drawn by sixteen white horses. The royal umbrella held over his head,

Picture of an ancient Hindú procession.

glittering and sparkling in the bright light of an Indian sun. A *chámara* of white hairs waving on either side to keep off the flies, and at the same time adding pomp and significance to the scene. The bards and eulogists accompanying the chariot, chaunting in barbarous strains the praises of the new Sovereign, as the Raja of Rajas, the descendant of the gods, the wise, the mighty, and the victorious. Other Chieftains follow in chariots, or in nondescript seats borne on the shoulders of men. Glittering flags of every variety are adding to the gaiety of the scene; and garlands of flowers are hanging from every house and tree, as special signs of popular rejoicing.¹

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The protest of *Chárváka* after *Yudhishthira's* arrival at the palace is somewhat curious. He is said to have been a *Rákshasa* in disguise, and a warm friend of *Duryodhana*, but he also stands as the representative of a later heterodox sect, known as the *Chárvákas*. It seems, therefore, not improbable that the reference to *Chárváka* is an interpolation of the Brahmanical compilers, introduced for the controversial purpose of exhibiting the heretic as the ally of *Duryodhana* and enemy of *Yudhishthira*, who was justly destroyed by the angry glance of the *Bráhmans*.

Story of *Chárváka* a later interpolation intended as a side blow against the sect of *Chárvákas*.

¹ Such scenes as those described above are frequent at Hindú Courts, or at audiences granted to Rajas by the Viceroy of India. The Raja and his attendant Chieftains are arrayed in cloth of gold, and radiant with jewels. The old Hindú car, or rath, may be replaced by an elephant or a European barouche; but the *chámatas*, the eulogists, and the banners are all there. Other insignia seem to have been added in modern times, such as Chobdars or silver sticks, and above all a large hookah. The hookah indeed is regarded as a special emblem of dignity, and is kept alight, and occasionally smoked during the progress; the hookah-bearer carrying the bowl on the seat by the side of the monarch, while the Raja sits in the carriage and smokes through a long and nicely ornamented tube.

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Secondly, the
installation of
Yudhishtira.

Doubtful au-
thenticity of the
details.

Apparent origin
of the various
ceremonies.

The description of the inauguration of Yudhishtira is very suggestive. Most of the ceremonies are still performed at the installation of modern Rajas; and indeed the Mahá Bhárata is generally regarded as an authority upon the subject. It is, however, difficult to say whether the ceremonies were actually performed in the case of Yudhishtira, or whether they are not to be treated as later interpolations, introduced for the purpose of bringing the old tradition into conformity with modern Brahmanical rites. The enthroning of Yudhishtira with his face towards the east, or sunrise, may probably be a relic of the old worship of the Sun. The introduction of Krishna appears mythical for reasons already stated. The touching of rice, flowers, earth, gold, silver, and jewels seems to be an assertion of sovereignty. The offering of milk, honey, and ghee is Vedic. The sacred shell is an emblem of the god Vishnu. The leaves and twigs of trees, and the pots of water from sacred rivers, appear to belong to some old fetische rites which have been adopted by the Bráhmans. The tiger's skin is a reference to the god Siva, who is generally represented as sitting or lying upon the skin in question. The offering of the homa, and the pouring of the five purifying articles produced from the cow upon the heads of the Raja and Rání, are Brahmanical rites, but of very ancient origin, being connected with the primitive worship of the cow as the giver of milk, butter, and curds. The description of the patience of Yudhishtira, his perfect tranquillity, and his profound respect for the Bráhmans, may perhaps be treated as interpolations of the Brahmanical compilers. The significance, however, of these several rites can only be fully explained by

reference to the different religions, and will accordingly be discussed hereafter.¹

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¹ The following description of the ceremonies to be performed at the inauguration of Rajas is taken from the Agni Purāna.

“A Raja should appoint a family priest and astrologer, wise counsellors, and a Rāni possessed of due accomplishments; at the period appointed by the astrologer or upon the death of his predecessor, he should make preparations for his coronation. The person to be crowned should be bathed with Tila (*sesimum orientale*) and white mustard (that is, with water in which these have been steeped), and the astrologer and Purohita should proclaim his title when he should be seated on an auspicious throne; he should then hold out hopes of prosperity to his subjects, and set prisoners at liberty. Previous to the coronation the family priest should perform the *Ain-drīsanti*, a sacrifice made in honour of Indra to secure prosperity. The Raja should fast the day before the coronation, and on the next offer oblations upon the fire which is upon the altar, attended with the recitation of mantras sacred to Vishnu, Indra, Surya, Viswadeva, and Chandra. This ceremony tends to prolong the life, and is productive of religious merit and prosperity. The golden water-pot called *Aparāgita*, or tending to render one invisible, which is placed on the right side of the sacrificial fire, and receives the remains of the oblations of ghee, should be worshipped with flowers and sandal-paste. Good fortune attends the Raja if the flame turn round to the right, if it appear like pure gold when heated, occasion a sound like that of a number of cars, or of the clouds; when there issues no smoke, but a fragrant vapour, and when it is of the form of a swastika (particular kind of temple, etc.); if the flame be clear and raging, without emitting any sparks; and if no cats, deer, or birds, pass between the fire and the performer of the ceremony.

“The Raja should cleanse his head with earth brought from mountain-tops; his two ears with earth from the tops of white ant-hillocks, and his face with that of a Vishnu Maridapa, or a house in which that deity is worshipped. He should cleanse his neck with earth from Indra’s temple; his bosom with that from the court-yard of the palace; his right hand with that raised by the tusks of elephants; his left hand with that raised by the horns of bulls; his back with the earth of a tank; his belly with that of a place where two rivers meet; his two sides with that of the two opposite sides of a river; his buttocks with that of the door of a brothel; his thighs with the earth of the spot on which the sacrifice has been performed; his knees with that of a cow-house; his legs with that of a stable; and his feet with that from the wheels of a car.

“The Raja being then seated on a splendid throne, his head should be washed with *Pancha Gavya* (milk, curds, ghee, and the urine and dung of a cow). The four ministers of the Raja belonging to the four classes shall afterwards bathe the Raja, viz. the Brāhman with ghee filled in a golden pot, standing on the east side; the Kshatriya with milk filled in a silver pot, standing on the south side; the Vaisya with curds filled in a copper pot, standing on the west side; and the Sudra with water filled in an earthen pot, standing on the north side. An eminent Brāhman should then bathe the Raja and Rāni with honey; a Brāhmāṇi, who sings the Sama Veda, should bathe them with water and some kusa grass; and the family priest, having entrusted the preservation of the sacrificial fire to the care of a Sadasya (a bystander, who has to notice and correct mistakes), and repairing to the golden pot in which the remains of the oblations of ghee have been received, should bathe the Raja, repeating the incantations which secure the good

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fortune of Rajas. The priest should then return to the altar, and a Bráhmaṇ, who sings the Yajur Veda, should bathe the Raja with water in a golden pot, having a hundred holes, mixed with Sarvaṇshadi and Mahāṇshadi (certain classes of drugs), ghee, sandal-paste, flowers, the common citron, gems, and kusa grass. The water is to be purified by mixing it with the above articles one by one, attended with the recitation of their respective mantras from the Yajur Veda. A Bráhmaṇ, who sings the Atharva Veda, should afterwards mark the head and throat of the Raja with the yellow pigment, called Gorachana.

“After this a great number of Bráhmaṇs having assembled together should place a pot filled with Sarvaṇshadi (a class of drugs), and water brought from all the Tirthas (places of pilgrimage), before the Raja, whilst he shall be fanned with the tails of the Bosgrunnies, and music and singing be carried on. The Raja shall behold the pot, a looking-glass, some ghee, and some other fortunate omens. He should then worship Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, and other gods; also the planets and elephants. The Purohita being seated on a bed covered with a tiger's hide, the Raja should present him with a dish of curds and honey, and have his turban bound. The turban of the Raja, seated on a bed covered with the hides of a bull, cat, elephant, lion, and tiger, should then be bound. The door-keeper is to point out to him his ministers, etc. The Raja should offer cars, goats, sheep, houses, and other gifts to his Purohita and the astrologer, and give away various other things to other Bráhmaṇs. Having gone round the sacrificial fire, made obeisance to his spiritual tutor, and touched the back of a bull, he is to present his Guru with cows and clothes. Let him then proceed along the main street on a horse or an elephant, attended by his forces, and having circumambulated the city re-enter its limits. He is to entertain all the persons present, and then dismiss them.”—Wilson's MSS. in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HORSE SACRIFICE OF RAJA YUDHISHTHIRA.

WHEN Yudhishtira was established in the Raj of Bhárata, he attempted the celebration of a great sacrifice known as the Aswamedha, or sacrifice of a horse. This extraordinary rite bore some resemblance to the Rajasúya sacrifice, which he had already performed when he and his brethren had cleared the jungle of Khándava-prastha and founded the Raj of Indra-prastha. But whilst the Aswamedha seems to have been an assertion of sovereignty over conquered Rajas, it was invested with an importance and significance which were wanting in the Rajasúya. Indeed the performance of an Aswamedha was a task of peculiar difficulty, whilst it was the greatest rite that a Raja could perform. By the Rajasúya a Chieftain seems to have asserted his sovereignty over a new and independent Raj. But by the Aswamedha he was popularly supposed by an ignorant and childlike people to have asserted his sovereignty over the whole earth; and by the successful performance of a hundred Aswamedhas, it was implicitly believed that a mortal Raja would overthrow the celestial Raj of Indra, and become at once the ruler of the universe and the sovereign of the gods.

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Performance of
an Aswamedha
contemplated
by Yudhishtira.

The Aswamedha
a more important
rite than
the Rajasúya.

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Sacrifice of the horse at the close of an Aswamedha associated with the worship of the Sun.

Greek conception of the Sun god.

Horse sacrifice of the Massagetæ.

Disappearance of the Aswamedha in India.

pointed out to the inquisitive inquirer, and doubtless would be long preserved in local tradition.

The Aswamedha thus originally combined the idea of conquest and sovereignty with that of a national banquet at which the roasted horse might have been regarded as a national or imperial dish. But, at the same time, the sacrifice was undoubtedly invested with a religious significance, which is wanting in the *Rajasúya*. It was connected with the worship of the Sun, which, like the worship of the serpent, appears to have been one of the most ancient of all religions. The idea that the Sun god was carried through the firmament, from his rising to his setting, in a golden chariot drawn by fleet and invisible steeds, was a favourite conception of the Greek bards. Again, Herodotus states explicitly, that the Massagetæ of High Asia sacrificed horses to the Sun, under the idea that the swiftest of animals should be offered to the swiftest of deities.¹ In the two Aswamedha hymns in the *Rig-Veda*, the horse is regarded as the type of the Sun, and also of Agni, or the deity of fire.² At a later, but still ancient period, the Aswamedha appears to

¹ Herodotus, Book i. c. 216.

² See *Rig-Veda*, Suktas cxiii. and cxiiii., Wilson's *translation*, vol. ii. pp. 112—125. It must be confessed that the two hymns in question are exceedingly obscure. They are undoubtedly ancient, but still they appear to have been composed in an age of mysticism, long after the primitive age of horse sacrifice, and possibly during some temporary revival of the ancient rite. They are replete with mysticism, and are wholly wanting in that exultation in victory, and joyous anticipation of a feast, which are likely to have found expression in a more primitive and barbarous period, of which relics are to be found in the legendary narrative preserved in the *Mahá Bhárata*. Indeed, in the opening verse of the first of the Aswamedha hymns, the worshipper positively deprecates the wrath of certain Vedic deities for thus paying reverence to the horse:—"Let neither Mitra nor Varuna, Aryaman, Ayu (i. e. Vayu), Indra, Ribhukshin (? Prajapati), nor the Maruts censure us, when we proclaim in the sacrifice the virtues of the swift horse sprung from the gods."—Wilson's *translation*.

have fallen into disuse; and during the successive ages of Buddhism and Brahmanical revival, it must have been virtually abolished as altogether opposed to the enlightened ideas of more civilized times. But still the institution lived in oral tradition, and was so deeply rooted in the memories and minds of the Hindús, that it even yet finds expression in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, and is frequently referred to in the other sacred books of the Hindús. An interpretation, however, has been generally placed upon the ceremonial, which was wholly unknown in primitive times, and which will form the subject of future discussion. In the Mahá Bhárata the Aswamedha is said to have been performed as an atonement for sin; in the Rámáyana it is said to have been performed for the purpose of obtaining a son; whilst in both poems, and in the Puránas generally, the sacrifice is said to have been frequently effected by ancient Bráhman sages for the acquisition of religious merit, and for the attainment of a supernatural power which should render them superior even to the gods.³

Brahmanical
interpretations
of the ceremoni-
al.

The description of the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, contains distinct references to the old primitive custom of loosening the horse, and fighting every Raja who opposed its progress, which has already been described. At the same time it is loaded with Brahmanical details and mythical references which are entirely at variance with this original idea. These

Brahmanical
interpolations in
the tradition of
the Aswamedha
of Yudhishthira.

Objections
against elimin-
ating the inter-
polations.

³ In the Yajur-Veda, which is much later than the Rig-Veda, the sacrifice was performed without any slaughter, the animals being tied to the posts whilst the invocations were being chaunted, and then let loose without injury.—Colebrooke on the Vedas. A legend is preserved in the Mahá Bhárata of a similar bloodless Aswamedha having been performed by the sage Vrihaspati.

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Three stages in
the perform-
ance of an Aswa-
medha.

interpolations however are too closely interwoven with what appears to be the original and authentic tradition, to be altogether eliminated; and moreover are more suggestive and amusing than the ordinary run of Brahmanical additions. Accordingly the legend will be exhibited as it stands in the Mahá Bhárata, although in a greatly abridged form; the whole being divided into three distinct narratives, corresponding to the three stages in the performance of an Aswamedha, viz.—

1st, The capture of the horse.

2nd, The loosening of the horse.

3rd, The sacrifice of the horse.

1st, Narrative of
the capture of
the horse.

The narrative of the capture, or, in other words, the stealing of the horse, may now be related as follows :—

Melancholy of
Yudhishtira.

Now after Yudhishtira had been established in the Raj, he again began to grieve very bitterly over the men who had been slain on his account in the great war; and the Mahá-
 raजा and Krishna tried to arouse him from his sorrow, and Krishna counselled him to perform sacrifices, and to entertain many guests, by which means he might cast aside his melancholy. After this Krishna returned to Dwáraká, when the sage Vyása appeared to Yudhishtira, and advised him to perform an Aswamedha as an atonement for all his sins; and Vyása told him of a place where he might procure abundant treasure for the ceremony; for that in former times when a Raja of Ayodhyá had performed the same sacrifice, he had given so much treasure to the Bráhmans that they could not carry it all away, and accordingly stored a large quantity in a certain spot in the side of the Himálaya mountain, where it still remained. But Raja Yudhishtira refused for many days to send for the treasure, because it belonged to the Bráhmans; until at length the sage Vyása explained to him that fire, water, earth, and riches belonged to no one, and might be kept by any one who found them. So after

na advises
to perform
sacrifices.

Vyása counsels
an Aswamedha
for the atone-
ment of his sins.

Yudhishtira's
objections to
taking a trea-
sure belong-
ing to the Brá-
hmans.

much discourse Raja Yudhishtira determined to perform the Aswamedha sacrifice, and to send for the treasure of the Brāhmanas which had been stored in the Himālaya mountain.

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Now it was the rule at Aswamedhas that the horse which was to be sacrificed should be of a pure white colour like the moon, with a yellow tail and a black right ear; or the horse might be all of a black colour. The horse was to be let loose on the fourteenth day after the entrance of the sun into Aries, being the night of the full moon in the month of Choitro; and it was to run loose for a whole year, with a gold plate on its forehead; and on the gold plate was to be inscribed the name of the Raja to whom it belonged, and a proclamation that an army was following the horse, and that all who stopped the horse, or who led him away, would be compelled to accompany the army until the end of the year, and then would be called upon to attend the Aswamedha sacrifice. And Vyāsa, the sage, also told Yudhishtira that the sacrifice was a very difficult one, inasmuch as no Raja could perform it who had not obtained a perfect control over all his passions. Moreover, Vyāsa commanded the Raja that he must not sleep a single night out of his city throughout the entire year; and that he must always sleep on the ground, with his wife by his side, and a naked sword between them; and that he must never once put his hand upon her, or the whole merit of the sacrifice would be turned to guilt. Vyāsa also informed the Raja that a horse bearing all the requisite marks would be found at a very distant city named Badravāti.

Rule of the Aswamedha.

Colour of the horse.

Night of the loosening.

Gold plate with inscription.

Necessity for the Raja to control his passions for an entire year.

When Vyāsa had thus spoken, Bhīma offered to go to the city of Badravati and bring away the horse; and Yudhishtira gave him permission, but wished that Krishna had been present to counsel him in the matter. Whilst they were speaking together word was brought that Krishna was standing at the gate of the palace; saying, that he would not enter a house at the request of a doorkeeper, but only at the invitation of the owner. So Yudhishtira and his brethren went out and saluted Krishna, and brought him into the palace, and told him of the Aswamedha sacrifice

Bhīma offers to go to the city of Badravati to bring away a horse for the Aswamedha.

Krishna's sudden appearance at the gate of the palace at Hastināpur.

Krishna brought into the palace by Yudhishtira and his brethren.

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Feast spread out
for Krishna's
meal.

Tantalizing of
Bhíma.

Krishna sets out
for Hastinápura.

Krishna's
motley camp.

Merriment of
the crowd.

Declaration of a
gay woman,
that by behold-
ing Krishna her
sins were for-
given her.

And he was exceedingly hungry, and seeing that there was no doorkeeper at the gate, he passed on until he came to the door of the hall where Krishna was about to sit down to dinner. Now Krishna was aware that Bhíma had arrived, but feigned not to see him; and he sent a maid to fasten the door of the hall, and feigned not to see Bhíma, who could only peep in and see and smell the exquisite feast that was laid out for Krishna's dinner. And Bhíma was ravenous from his long journey, and he beheld the table most plentifully served with sixty-four choice dishes of meat, and an immense tray of rice, together with various vegetables; and Krishna, still feigning not to see him, began to name aloud every dish, and to smack his lips at its savour, until Bhíma was well nigh frantic and near to faint. And when this jest had lasted a long time, Krishna admitted Bhíma, and when Bhíma had eaten and drank until he was full, he told his errand to Krishna. So Krishna immediately ordered all his sons to make ready for their departure to Hastinápura, and prepared to set out with Rukminí and Satyabháma and his other favourite wives, and all his family; leaving his father Vasudeva and his brother Balaráma in charge of Dwáraká.

Now when Krishna set out from Dwáraká, his camp was composed of an infinite number of tradespeople and artisans of all descriptions, and women of the lowest character. There were gay women, flower-women, oil-women, and milk-women; also jugglers, serpent-charmers, monkey leaders, and all kinds of pedlars and showmen. There were also some Chieftains of high rank, for Vasudeva and Balaráma accompanied Krishna during the first three stages. And as they marched along there was very much laughter and merriment amongst the crowd, especially on account of the women. And a certain woman of infamous character was travelling on a bullock, and she was overturned by a camel; and the people laughed when they saw the woman falling upon the ground, for her character was known to all. But the woman arose and said:—"There is no occasion for laughing, for every day I behold the divine

Krishna, and therefore all my sins are forgiven me." And Krishna heard her words, but he only smiled. After this a flower-girl came up to Krishna, and said :—" I have these flowers for sale, and it is already mid-day ; I pray you therefore to order the camp to be pitched, that I may be able to sell my flowers before they are all withered and spoiled." Krishna replied :—" I will give orders that you be paid for every flower you have ;" and the flower-girl heard his words and rejoiced exceedingly. Then another woman who sold milk came to Krishna, and said :—" All my milk is being spoilt by the journey, and the people here take no heed of the poor and needy."

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Application of a
flower-girl to
Krishna.

Krishna's bene-
volent reply.

Application of a
milk-woman to
Krishna.

When Bhíma, who had been listening to these complaints, heard the grumbling of the milk-woman, he could contain himself no longer ; and he said to Krishna :—" All the gay women and flower-girls, and milk-women in the camp come to you as if there were nobody else to take care of them, as there surely ought to be." Krishna replied :—" Your pity for these poor women is so praiseworthy that I herewith constitute you their Superintendent-General." Bhíma said :—" I have in my house the daughter of an Asura as my wife, and should she see me in the company of these women, she would be very jealous, and would devour them up. I pray you, therefore, to appoint some Superintendent who has a great number of women in his family." But Krishna, who had many thousands of wives, excused himself, saying :—" I have Jámavatí in my family, who is the daughter of a Bear, and should she see such a number of handsome baggages about me, she would kill them all in like manner : But you Pándavas are five brothers with only one wife among you, and when she is with one of your brothers, these women will keep you from solitude." And all the people laughed at the words of Krishna. And Krishna sent the women to Bhíma accordingly, and they all sat round Bhíma and began to jest and laugh. And Bhíma said to them :—" Why do you come here to die ; no one but Krishna can bear the trouble of so many women : All of you know that I have a wife who is the daughter of an Asura ;

Bhíma com-
plains to Krish-
na of the trou-
blesome con-
duct of the
women.

Krishna ap-
points Bhíma to
be General Su-
perintendent of
the women.

Jesting conver-
sation between
Bhíma and
Krishna.

Bhíma's address
to the women.

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been always very intimate; and the languages of the Bráhmanized populations of India seem to have been more or less derived from the Sanskrit, or, at any rate, to have borrowed Sanskrit words and forms. But neither the language of Munnipore, nor that of the races eastward of the Munnipore valley, appear to have any connection whatever, with that of Sanskrit.

Brahmanical
description of
Munnipore.

The Raja.

The Minister.

The people.

Palace and city.

Reference to
artillery.

Poetical imagin-
ation mani-
fested in the
descriptions.

The descriptions, however, of the Raj and Raja of Munnipore, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, are exaggerations of the Bráhmanical idea of perfection. The Raja was unequalled for valour, very wise, and a model of chastity. The Minister administered affairs so skilfully that the country was well peopled, and not a measure of land was uncultivated. Moreover, he was very brave, and never gave bad counsel to the Raja. The people of the Raj always told the truth; the women obeyed their husbands; the Bráhmans were wise and devout, and studied the Vedas; the soldiers were strong and brave; and the Sanskrit language was spoken throughout the Raj. The golden walls of the palace, the silver walls of the city, and the exhaustless treasures of the Raja, are mere creations of the imagination; but the reference to fire-works, and especially to fire weapons placed in waggons, which were bound together by chains, seems to indicate the use of artillery, and this reference is of some importance, as the original myth appears to have originated at a period not later than the eleventh century.¹³

The scenes which are described in connection with the carrying away of the horse, the meeting

¹³ See foot-note further on.

between the Raja and his father Arjuna, and the descent to the city of Serpents, indicate a poetical imagination of a high order. The picture of the Council hall is a marvellous work of painting; and it is presented, not in the glare of sunlight, but in the darkness of the night illuminated by a countless number of sandal-wood torches. The pillars, the walls, and the pavement are of pure gold, radiant with figures of birds and fishes composed of many-coloured gems. The Raja is seated on his throne, surrounded by his Chieftains, and before each one is placed a jewelled vase of perfumes. Presently the mysterious horse is led into the hall before the whole assembly, with a golden plate upon his forehead, and a string of pearls hanging round his mane. The Minister reads the inscription on the golden plate, challenging the Raja to battle. The Raja suddenly discovers that his own father is the guardian of the horse; and that he must not only restore the horse, but tender the most abject submission to his newly-found father.

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PART II.

Wonderful description of the Council hall.

Entrance of the horse.

Surprise of the Raja.

The scene now changes. A procession is formed in accordance with Hindú ideas of pomp and grandeur. There is the Raja surrounded by his Ministers and Chieftains, all arrayed in gorgeous attire. There are the soldiers in their parade dresses; the Bráhmans, holy, devout, and learned; the beautiful and accomplished maidens, some in splendid chariots, some mounted on richly-caparisoned elephants, whilst others are walking on foot or proceeding in gay palanquins. There too are the girls with their boxes of perfumes; the tradesmen and artisans with samples of their wares; and the frail but attractive bands of singing and dancing women. Then follows

The grand procession of the Raja and his Ministers, accompanied by soldiers, Bráhmans, maidens, and dancing girls.

Extraordinary meeting between the Raja and Arjuna.

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INDIA.
PART II.

Death of
Arjuna.

Sensational
descent into
the city of Ser-
pents.

Hindú worship
of the Serpent
as a guardian
deity.

Revered
as of a city
cobras.

the meeting between the son and the father. The Raja manifests his filial respect by wiping the shoes of Arjuna with his long hair; upon which Arjuna strikes him to the earth, and accuses him of being a coward and the son of a herdsman. Next follows the mythical battle in which Arjuna is slain; and the palace rings with the screams of his wife Chitrángadā, who calls for a funeral pile that she may be burned with the body of her slaughtered husband. Lastly, the descent into the subterranean regions, and conquest of the city of Serpents, create a sensational thrill in a Hindú audience, which few who have not resided in India will be able to apprehend. Ages of Brahmanism have failed to crush out the old primitive worship of the serpent, as the mysterious deity of the regions below. To many he is the guardian deity of the household, to be propitiated with mantras and offerings of food; and, according to the popular belief, it is the great Raja of Serpents, the mighty Sesha-nāga, who supports the universe upon his head. But still the Hindú imagination calls up exaggerated visions of the terrible serpent-gods, whose irresistible coils and venomous fangs are deadly to all save the all-powerful charmer; whose gleaming coats are radiant with a thousand dyes, and whose wrathful hoods are sparkling with countless gems; whose city in the under world is as brilliant as a mine of jewels, and who dwell there in endless numbers, with wives of unearthly beauty, and children as fascinating and as terrible as themselves.

The religious ideas connected with the old worship of serpents may be reserved for discussion hereafter; but still it may be remarked how admirably the present myth is adapted to wean a barbarous people

from so low a form of worship, and to lead them to adopt the gods of the Bráhmans. Not a single idea is expressed which could wound the prejudice of the serpent worshipper. The power of the Serpents is duly acknowledged, and their city is described with a marvellous power of fancy. But the Serpent Raja himself acknowledges the superiority of Krishna; and the city of the Serpents is conquered by the son of Arjuna. The result has been that notwithstanding the late advent of Bráhmanism, the myth of the sacrificial horse has taken a powerful hold upon the minds of the rude and half-savage Munniporees. The spot where the horse is said to have entered the Munnipore valley is still pointed out, and goes by the name of Sagon-mang, or "horse-lost;" the spot where he was caught is still called Sagon-pul, or "horse-stopped;" and the part of the palace enclosure into which he is said to have been led is still called Sagon-keephum, or "horse-tying place." The cavity down which the descent was made in search of the jewel is still to be seen; and there in that cavity is said to reside the Serpent ancestor of the Rajas of Munnipore, and over it is still placed the throne of the reigning Raja.¹⁹

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Adaptation of
the mythic de-
tails to the
Munniporees.

Locale of the
adventures of
the horse still
pointed out by
the Munniporees.

The later adventures of the horse are of very minor importance. They are mere extravagances

Later adven-
tures of the
horse connected
with Krishna.

¹⁹ For many particulars in the foregoing observations, I am indebted to Colonel MacCulloch, the present Political Agent at Munnipore. It is somewhat curious that the mythical account of Arjuna's adventures in Munnipore should have been composed many centuries before the actual introduction of Brahmanism into the country. Yet such would appear to be the case, for the myth is referred to in the Vishnu Purána, which seems to have been composed in the eleventh century; whilst the evidence of Colonel MacCulloch is indisputable as regards the absence of all traces of Brahmanism prior to the eighteenth century. (See Wilson's Introduction to the Vishnu Purána.) From the allusion to the Chándels it would seem that the myth was composed in the North-Western Provinces, where the Chándels are to be found. See *ante*, p. 404, note.

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Dubious character of the miracle of Krishna's restoring a dead man to life.

referring to Krishna, from which nothing tangible can be inferred. The eleventh adventure contains the story of the son of Jayadratha being restored to life by Krishna; but the alleged miracle is in every way exceedingly dubious. The young man dies suddenly on hearing that Arjuna has entered the Raj; upon which Krishna takes him by the hand, and restores him to life. Here, if the myth were a true story, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that the young man did not die from so trifling a cause, but merely fell into a swoon, from which he was recovered by Krishna.

Triumphant return of Arjuna with the sacrificial horse, an illustration of Hindú rejoicings.

The adventures of the horse being brought to a close, Krishna returned to Hastinápura, and was subsequently followed by Arjuna. The triumphant entry of Arjuna is described in the usual fashion. All the people of the city dressed out their houses, and put on their best attire, to welcome back the victorious prince. The armies of Arjuna, and those of the Rajas accompanying him, marched in grand array amidst the acclamations of the multitude. Garlands were thrown down from the verandahs, and money was scattered in all directions. Finally Yudhishtira gave a magnificent reception to all the Rajas assembled, and received each one so graciously that they are said to have all repented that they had not submitted at a much earlier period, and spent their entire lives in the service of so great a Raja.

Gracious character of Yudhishtira's reception of the Rajas.

3rd. Narrative of the sacrifice of the horse combined with the offering of homa.

The narrative of the third and concluding event in the performance of the Aswamedha resembles in some respects the description of the Rajasúya, inasmuch as it involves two distinct classes of ceremonies, namely:

First. The rites connected with the sacrifice of

the horse, which may be regarded as forming a part of the original Kshatriya tradition.

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Secondly. The rites connected with the offering of the homa, which may be regarded as the details of a Brahmanical sacrifice, introduced by the Brahmanical compilers, for the purpose of imparting a Brahmanical tone to the performance of the Aswamedha.

It will be seen hereafter that an attempt has been made to represent these two distinct classes of rites as forming a part of the ancient ceremony. The horse is apparently sacrificed in a paved area surrounded by pillars, whilst the homa is prepared and offered in eight sacrificial pits; but still the descriptions of the two rites are so carefully blended together in the Mahá Bhárata that it is difficult to separate them. When, however, consideration is given to the radical difference between the sacrifice of the horse and the offering of homa, and especially to the fierce opposition which prevailed between those who persisted in sacrificing animals and those who denounced the bloody offerings, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion, than that the account in the Mahá Bhárata is a compromise attempted by the later Brahmanical compilers to combine the simple offering of the homa with that sacrifice which formed the essential ceremony in the performance of an Aswamedha.

The offering of the homa introduced as a Brahmanical sacrifice.

Having thus indicated the difference between what appears to be two distinct narratives, it may now be as well to describe the Aswamedha as nearly as possible in the order in which the incidents appear in the Mahá Bhárata. The stages in the ceremony appear to have been seventeen in number, and are as follows:—

Seventeen stages in the performance of an Aswamedha.

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1st, The bathing of Raja Yudhishtira, and of Draupadī as his Rání.

2nd, The ploughing by Yudhishtira of the space set apart for the sacrifice with a golden plough.

3rd, The sowing of the space with different kinds of grain by Draupadī.

4th, The paving of the space with golden bricks.

5th, The eight pillars set up round the place of the sacrifice.

6th, The eight pits prepared for the homa, and eight corresponding ladles.

7th, The collection of vegetables and medicinal herbs for the homa.

8th, The procession to bring water from the Ganges.

9th, The performance of the homa.

10th, The purification of the Raja and the priests with the Ganges water.

11th, The speaking of the horse.

12th, The sacrifice of the horse.

13th, The offering of the horse to the gods.

14th, The distribution of the merits of the sacrifice.

15th, The disposal of the remains of the homa.

16th, The distribution of presents.

17th, The feast.

The narrative of these several rites, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, may now be related as follows.

Description of
the Aswamedha.

Preparations.

Now all this while, the preparations were in progress for the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice. A golden throne was set up on a high place for Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira, and beneath that was another throne for Raja Yudhishtira; and other thrones of gold and sandal-wood were arranged for all the other Rajas and Chieftains according to their service.

The thrones of
gold and sandal-
wood.

qualities and dignities; and the Mahárája and all the Rajas and Chieftains took their seats upon the thrones. And all the wives and other ladies of the Rajas came to the assembly, and were arranged and seated on their own side, each one in the place appointed for her. And when all assembled were closely seated, Raja Yudhishtira and Draupadí bathed themselves; and the space of ground required for the sacrifice was duly measured out, and a golden plough was brought, and two bullocks were harnessed to the plough. Then Raja Yudhishtira rose up, and with his own hand drove the bullocks and ploughed that space; and Draupadí followed the Raja, and carried a parcel of all the different grains which were grown in the Raj of Bhárata, and sprinkled the grain as fast as the Raja ploughed. And the Bráhmans sat along with the ladies, and whilst the Raja ploughed, both the Bráhmans and the ladies offered up prayers in his behalf with a loud voice. The space of ground was then covered with four hundred golden bricks; and the sage Vyása, accompanied by Vasishtha, and Nárada, and other Rishis, seated themselves on the golden pavement. The Raja then commanded that eight pillars should be set up round that golden pavement; and a roof covered with gold was placed over the pavement, and a banner was fixed on the top of each pillar. Then eight large pits were dug in order that the homa of milk, curds, and clarified butter might be prepared therein; and eight large sacrificial ladles were furnished for casting the homa on the sacrificial fire; and a large cloth of skins was sewed together, in which was placed a portion of every vegetable which is food for man, and a portion of every medicinal herb which were produced in that Raj, and the whole was put into the homa. And Vyása was appointed to be President of all the Bráhmans, who were to obey his orders as to the performance of the homa. And all the most famous Rishis were present at that sacrifice, and they selected the most distinguished persons to sit by the side of the place where the homa was performed. And Raja Yudhishtira sat with a deer's horn in his hand; and Vyása desired him to command that sixty-four of the

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Assembly of
the ladies.

Ploughing and
sowing the land.

Prayers of the
Bráhmans and
ladies.

The pavement
of gold bricks.

The eight
pillars, pits,
and ladles.

The vegetables
and medicinal
herbs.

Vyása presi-
dent.

Sixty-four pots
of water
brought in pro-
cession from the
Ganges.

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principal Rajas and Rishis in the assembly should go with their wives to the bank of the Ganges; and that both the and their wives should each fill a pitcher with the Gange water, and bring it to the place of the sacrifice. And Krishn and Arjuna and Bhíma, with a great party of Rajas and Rishis, each one accompanied by his wife, proceeded to the bank of the Ganges, all with pitchers on their heads; and along with them went a company of musicians with drums and trumpets, and other musical instruments, and many dancing-girls likewise danced before them. And when those who had gone to the bank of the Ganges for water filled all their pitchers, they took the pitchers on their heads, and returned to the place of the sacrifice, preceded by the musicians, and the singers, and the dancing-girls.

Distribution of dresses.

Then Raja Yudhishtira commanded that splendid dresses should be brought for all those who had carried water, and he caused both the Rajas and their wives to be dressed therewith, and he put a chain of choice jewels on each of their necks, and put betel nut into each of their mouths. And he ordered fires to be lighted in the pits which were dug for the homa, and the various ingredients for the homa to be presented to the fire. Then the Raja's brethren and kinsmen, and servants brought several loads of gold and jewels and clothes, together with many elephants, horses, and cows, and gave to each Bráhmaṇ in such quantities that all were fully satisfied and contented.

Performance of the homa.

After this, a throne made of sandal-wood, covered with gold, was brought for Raja Yudhishtira. And the Raja sat thereon, and those around him took off his clothes; all those persons who had brought water from the Ganges took up their pitchers and poured the water over the Raja's head. The horse was then brought, and the remainder of the water with which the Raja had been bathed was poured upon the horse's head. Then Nácula opened the mouth of the horse, and held up his head, and said:—"The horse is speaking!" And those around cried out:—"What does the horse say?" Nácula replied:—"The horse says:—'In other Yagyas wherein a horse is sacrificed, he goes to Swarga, which is the

Ganges water poured over the head of the Raja and the head of the horse.

Speech of the horse.

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Distribution of
the merits of
the Aswamedha.

General re-
joicings.

Yudhishtira's
apologies to
Vyása the sage.

Assigns estates
to Vyása, who
transfers them
to the Bráhmans.

Proportions of
gifts to the
Bráhmans.

Yudhishtira's
apologies to the
Rajas.

world endures." Raja Yudhishtira replied :—" All that has come to me has been entirely by your favour." The Krishna, with all the Rajas and principal Rishis, poured pitchers of water over Yudhishtira and Draupadí, and bathed them. Then all that remained of the medicinal herbs that had been brought to make the homa, was reduced to powder and a ball of it was given to each of the persons present to eat ; and by so doing Raja Yudhishtira gave to each one his share of the merit of that Aswamedha Yaga ; and last of all Raja Yudhishtira partook of it himself. Then all the musical instruments struck up a symphony of rejoicing for the close of the Yaga ; and Kuntí with all her maidens and dependents manifested every sign of joy, and bestowed great quantities of effects and goods in gratitude to the gods who had enabled her son to perform so great a Yaga and who had accepted the sacrifice. And all the materials for the homa were collected into one place, and the Bráhmans uttered blessings over them, and threw them all at once into the fire.

After this, Raja Yudhishtira arose and approached Vyása, and said :—" This Yaga, by your exertions and favour, is now brought to a close ; how can I make sufficient apologies to you for your trouble ?" Vyása replied :—" O Raja, you are my son, and it is my duty to sympathize with you in your concerns ; therefore you have no need making any apologies to me." The Raja then assigned to Vyása certain estates well inhabited and cultivated, of great abundance of goods and chattels ; and Vyása transferred the whole of them as free gifts to the Bráhmans. Raja Yudhishtira then gave to each of the Bráhmans who had performed the homa, and to each of those who had assisted in the Yaga, a chariot, an elephant, ten horses of the best quality, four maunds of gold, a hundred milch cows with gilded horns, two seers and a half of pearls, and four intelligent slaves, who had learned the Vedas and all other sciences ; and to all the other Bráhmans, who had been present but had not taken a part in the ceremony, Raja Yudhishtira gave half as much. And when the Raja had finished bestowing his largesses upon the Bráhmans, he

turned to the Rajas, and made apologies to each; and he gave to each of the great Rajas a thousand horses of the first quality, and a hundred war elephants, and one crore of gold coin; and to each of the Raja's wives he gave everything that was necessary for a bride on her wedding night, including gold and precious jewels and splendid clothes. Yudhishtira then gave to each of the sons, and kinsmen, and friends of Krishna, twice as much as he had given to the Rajas; and he went respectfully to Krishna, and said:—"I have nothing worthy of your acceptance; but since the Yaga has been completed under your favour, I make a free offering of all its acquired merits to you."

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Distribution of
gifts.

Double gifts to
Krishna's
family.

Raja Yudhishtira then said to his brother Bhîma:—"Take all the Brâhmans and feast them!" So Bhîma feasted all the Brâhmans with the best of victuals and drink in golden trays and vessels; and after the feast he gave the whole of the golden vessels to those Brâhmans. The assembly then broke up, and all the Rajas returned to their own quarters; and the next day Krishna took leave, and set off for Dwâarakâ; and all the other Rajas took leave in like manner and set off for their respective countries.

Bhîma feasts
the Brâhmans.

Departure of
the Rajas.

The foregoing description of the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishtira requires but little further comment. The rite of bathing calls for no remark, as it was and is performed at every important ceremony practised by the Hindûs, and indeed is especially enjoined as a purifying rite by the Brahmanical law. The rite, in which the Raja ploughed the land set apart for the sacrifice, and the Râni sowed specimens of all the grains that grew in the Raj, was no doubt an ancient ceremony expressive of sovereignty, and appears to have been of Scythian or Buddhist origin. According to a Scythian tradition preserved by Herodotus, a golden plough fell from heaven at a remote period, and was for ever afterwards preserved by the

Review of the
foregoing de-
scription of the
Aswamedha.

Ploughing the
place of sacri-
fice a Scythian
or Buddhist
custom.

Scythian tradi-
tion of a golden
plough.

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Description in
the Mahawanso
of the plough-
ing of con-
secrated ground
by a Buddhist
sovereign.

The Buddhist
procession.

Description of
the offering of
homa.

Royal Tribe as one of the emblems of royalty.²⁰ It is also still more remarkable that a golden plough was used by Buddhist sovereigns at the consecration of a monastery or temple; and a graphic description has been preserved in the Mahawanso of the performance of this ceremony by a monarch who reigned in the third century before the Christian era. The ground was first sprinkled with red sandal-wood, after which two elephants were harnessed to the golden plough, and the Buddhist Raja ploughed along the boundary line; accompanied by the priests and guarded by officials carrying staves of gold and silver. A large company of troops marched in procession, together with beautiful females carrying umbrellas and other decorations, and musicians playing every description of instrument; whilst gorgeous flags tingling with bells were carried in the air, as well as painted vases, glass mirrors, and garlands and baskets of flowers. In this way the Buddhist Raja ploughed the land, passing through many triumphant arches made of plantain trees, whilst a vast multitude waved their handkerchiefs in the air and rent the skies with their enthusiastic acclamations.²¹

To return, however, to the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishtira. The attempt may now be made to separate those details which appear to belong to the Brahmanical offerings of the homa, from those which seem to refer to the sacrifice of the horse. The homa, consisting chiefly of ghee, was prepared in eight sacrificial pits, and was presented to the gods

²⁰ Herodotus, Book IV. c. 5. It should be remarked that the plough was accompanied by a yoke, or battle-axe, and a drinking-cup.

²¹ Mahawanso, *Turnour's translation*, pages 98, 99. The Chinese traveller, Fa Hian, seems to have witnessed a similar ceremony which, like the above, was performed in the island of Ceylon. *Travels of Fa Hian*, chap. xxxix.

in sacrificial ladles through the medium of fire ; and on the present occasion samples of every vegetable, and every medicinal herb growing in the Raj, are said to have been likewise thrown into the homa. When the presentation of homa was over, the remaining portion of the medicinal herbs was reduced to powder and formed into balls ; and a ball was given to each person present. By this rite the Raja was supposed to give to one and all a share of the religious merits which had been acquired by the performance of the sacrifice, and which was supposed to wipe off from the account of good and evil deeds, an indefinite number of the evil actions which had been previously committed by the individuals concerned. It should also be remarked that the offering of the homa was exclusively performed by Bráhmans, under the superintendence of the mythical Vyása, and in the presence of all the Rishis who are famous in Brahmanical tradition.

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Vegetables and
medicinal herbs
thrown into the
homa.

Distribution of
the religious
merit acquired
by the homa.

Bráhmans alone
engaged.

It will now be seen that the sacrifice of the horse was carried out in a very different fashion ; and that the rite was performed not by Bráhmans, but by two

Description of
the sacrifice of
the horse.

of the Pándavas. The place of sacrifice is said to have been paved with bricks of gold ; and this costly arrangement was no doubt often carried out when the Aswamedha was performed by a rich and conquering Raja. Solomon overlaid not only the altars but the very temple itself with plates of gold ; and amongst the treasures of Cræsus were a number of golden bricks which may possibly have been cast for a similar purpose.²² Round the place of sacrifice eight pillars were set up, to which the horse, and perhaps other animals, were tied. The rite was per-

Golden bricks
or plates em-
ployed in an-
cient times.

The victims tied
to pillars.

Rite performed
by Nakula and
Sahadeva.

²² Herodotus, Book I. c. 50.

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Speech of the
horse a Brah-
manical inter-
polation.

Unmeaning in-
troduction of
the Brahman
Dhaumya.

Conversion of
the horseflesh
into camphor
and homa.

Vedic idea of
the ascent of
the horse's
head.

formed by Nákula and Bhíma, although various attempts are made, chiefly involving the introduction of some supernatural detail, to impart a Brahmanical tone even to this portion of the narrative. Thus when Nákula declared that the horse was speaking, he was probably acting in accordance with a crude notion that a victim before sacrifice was capable of prophesying. But the language put into the mouth of the animal is eminently Brahmanical; for the horse is said to have exulted in the idea that instead of going like other sacrificial horses to the heaven of Indra, he was going beyond it, that is, to the heaven of Vishnu, because of the presence of Krishna. Again Dhaumya, the family priest, is introduced, to give the scimitar to Bhíma, and to perform the senseless miracle of squeezing milk out of the horse's ear. The whole concludes with a miracle, in which the flesh of the horse approximates to camphor, and is finally converted by Dhaumya into homa. Here the Brahmanical rite distinctly overlays the original rite; for it is certain that in the ancient performance of an Aswamedha, the flesh of the horse was cooked upon the fire, and was both presented to the gods and eaten by the assembled guests.²³ The statement that the head of the horse ascended to heaven is also a miracle, but originates in a Vedic idea rather than in the prolific imaginations of the Brahmanical compilers.²⁴

²³ The first Aswamedha hymn in the Rig-Veda describes the boiling and roasting of different portions of the flesh, the presentation of a part to the gods, and the eating of a part by the persons present. See Wilson's *Translation*, Vol. II. p. 121, *note*.

²⁴ See the second Aswamedha hymn in the Rig-Veda, Wilson's *Translation*, Vol. II. p. 123, in which the worshipper is supposed to be reciting the following verse:—"I recognize in my mind thy form afar off, going from the earth below,

One other incident seems to require some explanation. It has already been stated that the horse was originally sacrificed to the Sun; and yet in both the Mahá Bhárata and the Rámáyana the horse is said to have been offered to Indra. This change of deity seems to involve a new stage in the development of the Hindú religion. The worship of the Sun as a material existence had been superseded by the worship of a more human deity and protector in the person of Indra; just in the same way that the worship of the human hero Indra was subsequently superseded by the worship of the great Spirit Vishnu. The circumstances which led to this change in the national religion may be easily conjectured. The Sun is the deity of temperate climates, for it is he who ripens the harvests; but in a tropical climate like India the favourite deity is the one who sends the rain; and the Vedic deity who sends the rain is Indra, the god of the firmament. The subject is a curious one, and will be discussed in a future volume under the head of religion.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Sacrifice of the horse to Indra, instead of to the Sun, indicative of an ancient change in the national religion.

by way of Heaven, to the Sun : I behold thy head soaring aloft, and mounting quickly by unobstructed paths, unsullied by dust."

CHAPTER XVII.

FINAL TRAGEDIES.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

Duration of the
Raj of the Pán-
davas for thirty-
six years.

Incidents
marking the

THE story of the Mahá Bhárata virtually ends with the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira. The great war was over; the Pándavas had slain all their enemies; and Yudhishthira had not only been inaugurated in the Raj, but had celebrated the great horse sacrifice which established his sovereignty. A period of thirty-six years is said to have followed, at the expiration of which the Raj of the Pándavas was brought to a close. This period was marked by three incidents; the first of which occurred within a few years of Yudhishthira's inauguration, whilst the other two are connected with the termination of his reign. These three incidents are as follows:—

1st, The exile and death of Mahárája Dhritaráshtira.

2nd, The destruction of Dwáráká and death of Krishna.

3rd, The exile and death of the Pándavas.

The narrative of the exile and death of the blind old Mahárája requires no preliminary explanation. It involves, however, a wonderful miracle performed by the sage Vyása, which stands out as one of the finest products of Hindu imagination which can be

1st. The exile
and death of
Mahárája Dhri-
taráshtira.

found in the Mahá Bhárata. The narrative may be left to tell its own story :—

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Now after Raja Yudhishthira had performed the great Aswamedha Yaga, the Pándavas lived for many years in peace and prosperity under Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira in the city of Hastinápur. But though the Pándavas had succeeded the Kauravas in the rule of the Raj, and were zealous in the performance of every filial duty towards their uncle the Mahárajá, yet Dhritaráshtira could never forget the death of his own sons, and could never forgive Bhíma for having slain Duryodhana. And there sprung up many bitter disputes between Bhíma and the Mahárajá, and Bhíma treated his blind uncle with insult, and refused to obey his commands ; and Dhritaráshtira determined to live at a distance from the brethren. And Dhritaráshtira departed out of Hastinápur, and went away to live in the jungle on the bank of the Ganges ; and he took with him his wife Gándhárí, and Kuntí, who was his brother's widow, and Vidura, and all the older members of the family ; and they abode there on the bank of the Ganges.

Peace and prosperity.

Bitter disputes between Bhíma and the Mahárajá.

The Mahárajá departs with Gándhárí and Kuntí to the jungle on the Ganges.

And it came to pass that after some years, the Pándavas were desirous of paying their respects to Mahárajá Dhritaráshtira and the Rání Gándhárí, and to see again all their aged kinsfolk who had sought an abiding place in the jungle. And the five brethren went forth with their wife Draupadí, and paid a visit to the Mahárajá, and all were rejoiced to see them ; but when they asked for Vidura, they were told that he had gone to the bank of the Ganges to die by fasting ; and they hastened to the place where Vidura was, and when they came up to him he was speechless, and gave up the ghost.

Visit of the Pándavas to the Mahárajá.

Death of Vidura.

After this, whilst all were talking together of the husbands, and the sons, and the kinsfolk whom they had lost in the great war of Mahá Bhárata, the sage Vyása appeared amongst them, and said :—"I will this day heal all your griefs : Go you all to the river Ganges, and bathe therein, and there each one of you shall behold the kinsmen for whom you have been sorrowing." So they all went

The sage Vyása promises to assemble the ghosts of all who were slain in the great war of Mahá Bhárata.

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

The five Pándavas and their wife Draupadi assume the garb of devotees.

perfect amity with each other. Yudhishtira then took off his earrings and necklace, and all the jewels from his fingers and arms, and all his royal raiment; and he and his brethren, and their wife Draupadi, clothed themselves after the manner of devotees, in vestments made of the bark of trees. And the five brethren threw the fire of their domestic sacrifices and cookery into the Ganges, and went forth from the city following each other. First walked Yudhishtira, then Bhíma, then Arjuna, then Nakula, then Sahadeva, then Draupadi, and then a dog. And they went through the country of Banga towards the rising of the sun; and after passing through many lands they reached the Himálaya mountain, and there they died one after the other, and were transported to the heaven of Indra.

Died on the Himálaya mountains.

Review of the foregoing narrative of the close of the history.

The foregoing narrative of the closing scenes in the history of the Pándavas is overlaid in the Mahá Bhárata with many puerile details of a Brahmanical character from which nothing of value can be inferred. They involve some exaggerated moral precepts and a fanciful description of a hell; and as these can only serve to illustrate the later religious conceptions of the Hindús they may be reserved for future discussion.

Mythical details.

Conclusion of the Mahá Bhárata.

Here, then, ends the great national poem of the Mahá Bhárata, the treasury of Hindú history and fable, invested by modern interpreters with a deep religious meaning, and converted, as it were, into a testament for enforcing the worship of Krishna as the incarnation of Vishnu. But the light in which this matchless Epic is regarded by the modern Hindús may perhaps be best illustrated by the following paragraph which concludes the poem; and which, however absurd it may be to the European, is unquestionably the living faith of the millions.

who dwell in the Indian peninsula under British rule :—

HISTORY OF
INDIA.
PART II.

Modern Hindu
belief in the
virtues of the
Mahá Bhárata.

The reading of this Mahá Bhárata destroys all sin, and produces virtue ; so much so, that the pronounciation of a single sloka is sufficient to wipe away all guilt. This Mahá Bhárata contains the history of the gods of the Rishis in heaven and those on earth, of the Gandharvas and the Rákshasas. It also contains the life and actions of the one God holy, immutable, and true, who is Krishna ; who is the creator and the ruler of this universe ; who is seeking the welfare of his creation by means of his incomparable and indestructible power ; whose actions are celebrated by all the sages ; who has bound human beings in a chain, of which one end is life and the other death ; on whom the Rishis meditate, and a knowledge of whom imparts unalloyed happiness to their hearts ; and for whose gratification and favour all the daily devotions are performed by all worshippers. If a man reads the Mahá Bhárata, and has faith in its doctrines, he becomes free from all sin, and ascends to heaven after his death. If a man reads even the summary in the opening chapter of the Mahá Bhárata every morning and evening, he is absolved from all the sins that he commits during the day. As butter is to all other food ; as Bráhmans are to all other men ; as the Arunika chapter, which points out the way of salvation, is to all the four Vedas ; as amrita is to all other medicines ; as the ocean is to a pool of water ; and as the cow is to all other quadrupeds ;—so is the Mahá Bhárata to all other histories. He who on days of festival merely reads a small portion of the Mahá Bhárata, obtains the same advantages as is derived from reading the whole. He who attentively listens to ~~the~~ slokas of the Mahá Bhárata, and has faith in them, enjoys a long life and solid reputation in this world, and an eternal abode in the heavens in the next.

It is called Mahá Bhárata, because once upon a time the gods placed the Mahá Bhárata on one scale, and the Vedas on the other ; and because the Mahá Bhárata weighed

Reason for its
being called the
Mahá Bhárata.

forgiven by Yudhishtira, 340; the Pándavas go with Krishna to see Duryodhana, ib.; recriminations between Duryodhana and Krishna, ib.; manifestation of the divine approval of Duryodhana, 341; Krishna consoles the Pándavas and proclaims Yudhishtira Raja, ib.; the Pándavas proceed to the camp of the Kauravas and obtain great spoil, ib.; Yudhishtira requests Krishna to proceed to Hastinapur and excuse the proceedings of himself and brethren to the Mahárajá, ib.; Krishna reaches Hastinapur on the first quarter of the night, 342; interview between Krishna and the Mahárajá, ib.; affecting interview between Krishna and the Káñi Gándhárí, ib.; Krishna consoles Gándhárí by engaging that the Pándavas should prove more dutiful than the Kauravas, 343; Gándhárí's reply to Krishna, ib.; Krishna renews his promises, ib.; returns to the quarters of the Pándavas in the camp of the Kauravas, 344; review of the foregoing narrative of the last day of the great war, ib.; the revenge of Aswattháma, 346; review of the story of the revenge of Aswattháma, 355; appearance of the plain of Kurukshetra on the evening of the last day of the war, ib.; reconciliation of the living and burial of the dead, 359; narrative of the funeral ceremonies on the field of battle, 363; difficulty as regards the war lasting eighteen days, ib.; narrative of the funeral ceremonies on the field of battle—see Funeral Ceremonies; Vyása, the sage, promises to assemble the ghosts of the slain, 439; the armies reappear in all their pomp as when alive, 440; disappearance of the dead at the dawn, 441; the widows rejoice their husbands by drowning themselves in the Ganges, ib.

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- Chandra, the moon, connected in the Vedas with the soma plant, 21; regarded as the mythical progenitor of the great Lunar race of Bharata, ib.
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impossibility of adopting this alternative may be judged by the fact that even the late Professor Wilson, who undertook to give a literal rendering of Sâyaṇa's interpretation of the Rig-Veda, found himself obliged, by the rules of common sense and by the exigencies of the English language, to desert, not unfrequently, that venerable guide. I need hardly repeat what I have so often said,¹ that it would be reckless to translate a single line of the Rig-Veda without having carefully examined Sâyaṇa's invaluable commentary and other native authorities, such as the Brâhmanas, the Âranyakas, the Prâtisâkhyas, Yâska's Nirukta, Śaunaka's Bṛihaddevatâ, the Sûtras, the Anukramaṇis, and many other works on grammar, metre, nay, even on law and philosophy, from which we may gather how the most learned among the Brahmans understood their own sacred writings. But it would be equally reckless not to look beyond.

A long controversy has been carried on, during the last twenty years, whether we, the scholars of Europe, have a right to criticise the traditional interpretation of the sacred writings of the Brahmans. I think we have not only the right to do so, but that it is the duty of every scholar never to allow himself to be guided by tradition, unless that tradition has first been submitted to the same critical tests which are applied to the suggestions of his own private judgment. A translator must, before all things, be a "sceptic," a man who looks about, and who chooses that for which he is able to make himself honestly responsible, whether it be suggested to him, in the first instance, by the most authoritative tradition or by the merest random guess.

I offer my translation of such hymns as I can, to a certain extent, understand and explain, as a humble contribution to-

¹ This subject and the principles by which I shall be guided in my translation of the Rig-Veda have been discussed in an article lately published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, New Series, vol. ii., part 2, "*The Hymns of the Gaupâyanas and the Legend of King Asamâti*." The same volume contains two valuable articles on the same subject by Mr. J. Muir, D.C.L.

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